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IRISH CATHOLIC JOURNALISTS AND THE NEW NATIONALITY IN CANADA 1858-1870

by

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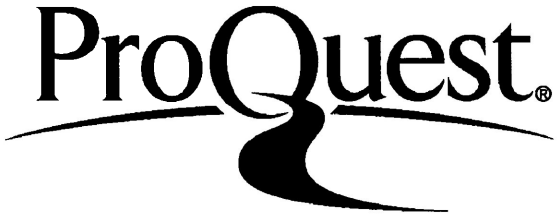

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the growth of the concept of a "New Nationality" as it became the ideology of a nation, and the means by which an ethnic group was "Canadianized". The main sources are the articles and speeches of Irish Catholic journalists as published in newspapers which represent a cross-section of political and geographical areas, showing the struggle for a new nationality as it was worked out in the Irish Catholic press.

The concept of a new nationality did not originate in British North America; its roots lay in early nineteenth century Ireland and it was brought to British America by an Irish Catholic journalist. The audience he and other journalists addressed was made up in large part of Irish Catholics only recently arrived in the New World, still bearing their memories, history, culture and prejudices. Between 1858, when the first proposals for Confederation were introduced in the Canadian Assembly, and 1870, when the new Dominion consolidated its acquisition of the West, the new nationality was central to the scheme of Confederation. In the 1860's especially, Irish Catholics were faced with painful choices as they settled into a new land. The role of Irish Catholic journalists is important in this period, not just to the general application of the new nationality, but more particularly in the process of assimilation experienced by the Irish Catholic community. In that struggle the concept of a new nationality played a major part. For Irish Catholic immigrants, their leaders were their journalists; and it was in the pages of their newspapers that the new nationality was debated and preached.

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CHAPTER ONE

"A NATION ONCE AGAIN"

The concept of a new nationality in North America was central to the scheme of Confederation of the British North American Provinces. It formed the ideological basis for a union that would otherwise have been difficult to rationalize, given the divergent histories, attitudes and perspectives of the various Provinces. Instead of being merely a political merger based on economic or military considerations, Confederation achieved the stature of grandeur, a constitutional experiment in nation-building through an emphasis on the creation of a New Nationality.

The concept, even the phrase "new nationality", as used in the campaign for Confederation, was, however, an imported one. It came, not from British Americans, but from an Irish Catholic journalist who arrived in Canada in 1857. As an ideology for Confederation, the new nationality owed much to the publicity given to it through the pages of Irish Catholic newspapers from 1857 to 1870 in the British American Provinces. As Irish immigrants arrived in the Provinces in increasing numbers during the first half of the century, they became an important component in the population. They came with their baggage of history. And as they groped to define their new identity as immigrants in the strange New World, their spokesmen in their press sought to give guidance and direction. The decade of the 1860's, so important in the history of Confederation, saw Irish Catholics in partic-

ular faced withggrave crises of loyalty as they were forced to choose between the old and the new nationality. This struggle, paralleling that of the Provinces to find a new formula for expressing their common links and separateness from the United States, supplied the idea of a new nationality for British America with a context, a forum and a willing audience.

The new nationality was a product of Ireland. It had its genesis in attempts by Irish nationalists to create a nationality that could embrace people from all backgrounds and traditions in the Irish context. The question of nationality in Ireland had always been a complicated one. In the centuries of English rule, many groups had settled on the island, blending, to varying degrees, with the native Irish Celts to produce a bewildering array of Gaels, Old English, Anglo-Irish and S Scots-Irish. Until the Glorious Revolution of 1688-90, Ireland had retained much of its Gaelic identity intact, a result of a very uneven British conquest that had left much of the country in the hands of the old Gaelic system of tribal control. There was no 'national' identity, or even a common defense against the foreign invasion. As a result, as the eighteenth century saw the traditional system almost completely destroyed by a series of Penal Laws against Catholics and Dissenters that broke the power of the Gaelic chiefs and replaced them with a Protestant elite. Political power went to the Anglican Establishment, who took over the Parliament of Ireland and began the reign of a Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland.

In 1782, inspired by the American Revolution, this Ascendancy demanded, by threats of rebellion, legislative independence for the

Irish Parliament. This was granted in a limited form which left a veto in the hands of British officials in London. Still, many of the members of the Irish Commons hoped that this would be the first step in the evolution of an Irish Protestant nation, linked to England, but independent in its local affairs. However, in spite of the fact that many of the Penal Laws had either been repealed or become dead letters over the years, Irish Catholics still had no right to sit in Parliament. They had received the vote in the 1790's and many of the Protestant leaders in the Irish Parliament hoped to see further steps taken towards the emancipation of Catholics. They were, however, in a minority, for the nation that most Irish Anglicans wanted to build was a Protestant one British rather than Irish in its nature and structures. To allow for Catholic emancipation would ensure Catholic dominance in the Parliament of Ireland and that they were not prepared to accept. Total union with Britain was preferable, and to this solution many Anglicans moved by the end of the century.

The impossibility of ruling Ireland through a Protestant elite was emphasized by the rise of a new organization dedicated to unite Irishmen of all classes and denominations: the United Irishmen. Founded in 1791, its aim was to sever the links between Britain and Ireland and form a separate Republic on the model of the Thirteen Colonies or that of the French Revolutionaries. It was a mainly bourgeois organization of intellectuals, but it was the first of a long series of Irish republican revolutionary societies dedicated to the total independence of Ireland and the unity of all Irishmen. The United Irishmen had their opportunity for revolution in 1798, when various parts of the country

were disturbed by often bloody and savage uprisings quickly put down by the authorities with equally savage efficiency. The north of the country, where the United Irishmen were founded and where they had most of their support, never rose at all. This was as a result of a great failure of the organization: the rifts between Catholics and Protestants were too great to hold the organization together for very long. Traditional fears and suspicions were too strong.

The Irish Parliament failed to live up to the expectations of its members. An Irish Protestant nation did not seem possible in the face of British vetoes and Irish Catholic rebellion. The integrity of the Parliament was often questioned even by its members:

> Who out of Ireland ever hears of Ireland? Who respects us? Where are our ambassadors? What treaties do we enter into? With what nation do we make peace or war? Are we not a mere cipher in all these, and are not these what give a nation consequence and fame?...True, we are an independent kingdom; we have an imperial crown distinct from England; but it is a metaphysical distinction, a mere sport for speculative men. 1

Irish Protestants were compelled to realize that they could not form a nation separate from England without involving the Catholics and such involvement would alter the nature of the nation they wanted. It seemed to many that the only viable alternative for them was to become one with Britain and to accept identity as British subjects. To that end, and in the aftermath of the 1798 rebellion which showed them how

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1 Sir Lawrence Parsons in the Irish House of Commons, 1790; quoted in Kee, Robert, The Green Flag, (London, 1972), p. 37.

uncertain was their security, they submitted to British pressure and voted themselves out of existence. The Irish Parliament was absorbed into that of Britain. It was the end of the attempt to form a distinctly Protestant nation in Ireland.

The United Irishmen had also failed. Their republican ideas had not managed to overcome the traditional sectarian divisions on the island. It would appear that whatever support they had garbered had stemmed more from grievances among the people than from any ideological convictions. During the trial of one of the United Irishmen leaders, Thomas Emmett, he was asked whether the object next the hearts of the Irish Catholics was not a separation from England and a republic. He replied: "Pardon me, the object next their hearts was a redress of their grievances." He added that if that could be achieved without violence, "they would prefer it infinitely to a revolution and a republic."[2] Although Emmett's views may be open to question as a single source, it seems likely from the events of the 1798 rising that he had an accurate grasp of the attitudes of Irish Catholics at the time. Nevertheless, the prevailing feeling in England at the time, as well as among Irish Anglicans, was that Irish Catholics were disloyal and very violent in their desire to see the two islands separated. The significance of Emmett's judgement was not recognized at the time, nor for many years after. It was to be understood in British North America only after many trials and testings for the Irish Catholics themselves.

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[2] Ibid., p. 126.

By 1800 two attempts to create an Irish nation had failed. The United Irishmen had been unable to unite Irishmen of different religious traditions, and the Irish Parliament had failed to form a political nation based on Anglican Ascendancy. Irish society was as splintered and sectionalised as ever, with Catholic and Protestant secret societies terrorizing each other on a local basis throughout the island. The most powerful of these groups was the Orange Order, founded in Belfast in 1795. It looked back to the Glorious Revolution and the defeat of the Papist James II at the battle of the Boyne in 1690 as the great inspiration of Loyalist Protestant Britain. It was a rabidly anti-Catholic organization completely dedicated to the link with the British Parliament and a Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland. It was in many ways mirrored by Catholic organizations in Ireland, although none of these achieved the same prominence and importance as the Orangemen. Following the failure of the United Irishmen in 1798, the two main religious factions in Ireland became polarized. There was no organization to bring Catholic and Protestant together.

The tremendous political upheavals of the last years of the eighteenth century in Ireland were followed by decades of social disturbances. The economic and social life of the country was to be revolutionized in the first half of the nineteenth century in ways which would forever change the nature of Irish affairs. In 1815, at the end of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe, Ireland had a population of about six million people, at least 90% of whom depended on the land for their very existence.[3] By

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[3]Adams, W.F., Ireland and Irish Emigration to the New World, (New York, 1932), p.3,6.

1821 Ireland had the highest density of population of any country in Europe
Europe, and by 1845 the population had risen to eight million. As a result of high prices paid to farmers during the European wars, rents on Irish property had risen sharply before 1815. Then, in the post-war slump, the pressure on peasants to pay their rents grew. Sub-letting was the way to meet the rent and soon families were being forced to live on holdings of 1/4 acre. However, with the post-war change from tillage to grazing which characterized that period, the number of tenants on holdings was reduced by landlords, and many were evicted from their lands.[4] Many Catholics moved to the northern counties where they were prepared to pay higher rents than their Protestant counterparts, mostly by living on less, and the Protestants were evicted. These, for the most part, constituted the main wave of Irish migration to North America from 1815 to 1830.[5] Displaced by Irish Catholics, these migrants carried with them a dislike and suspicion of Catholicism in all forms.

By the mid-1820's the situation in Ireland was already desperate. Two outside observers reported on the plight of Irish peasants in that decade. A resident magistrate in Cork said in 1824:

> I have seen several countries, and I never saw any peasantry so badly off. 6

The following year, the novelist Sir Walter Scott, visited Ireland and reported that the poverty of the Irish Catholic peasants was "on the extreme edge of human misery."[7]

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[4] Ibid., p. 10-11.

[5] Ibid., map facing p. 1.

[6] Kee, p. 170. [7] Ibid.

This was the Ireland in which the Irish Catholic journalists who were to play such an important role in the new nationality were born and raised. And it was in the midst of this misery and degradation that a new movement grew up which was to give Irish Catholics a new confidence and experience in political life. In 1823 a young lawyer from County Kerry called Daniel O'Connell began to campaign for Catholic emancipation. As a Catholic, O'Connell had been partly educated on the continent and resented the fact that Catholics could vote but not sit in Parliament, nor take any public office. To give his campaign broad support, O'Connell enlisted the help of the Catholic peasantry. Working through many of the agrarian groups that had sprung up in the previous half-century to protect tenants, a countrywide movement under a Catholic leader mobilized the Irish Catholics to fight for their rights in a constitutional manner. This was the first time such a thing had been attempted in Irish history. The Protestant elite, still in control of Irish political life even under the Act of Union, were faced with a popular mass movement. The level of support for O'Connell can be gauged by the success of what he termed 'the Catholic Rent', a membership fee of just one penny a week. This financed the emancipation campaign and often amounted to as much as a thousand pounds a week.[8] This was at a time when the country was facing near-catastrophic conditions. Faced with new tactics and mass support for O'Connell, the British authorities granted Catholic emancipation in 1829, at the same time disenfranchising the majority of Irish Catholics by raising the property requirements. This success, however limited, was crucial in two ways. It showed the

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[8] Ibid., p. 182.

the Irish Catholics that they could gain redress of their grievances peacefully through weight of numbers and by uniting. But it also was the start of a growing rift between moderate Catholics and Protestants, since the emancipation campaign, on O'Connell's orders, was confined almost entirely to Catholics. When he moved on in the following decade to campaign for a repeal of the Act of Union of 1801, the "Liberator", as he was known, found it hard to shed the ways of the past and include Protestants in his Repeal organization. Moderate Protestants joined the campaign, but found themselves as outsiders in the mainly Catholic Repeal Clubs. Thus, the dawning of Irish Catholic political awareness and power coincided with agrowing belief that Irish nationalism was a predominantly Catholic concern.

It was at this point in the development of Irish nationalist thinking that a small group of men established a newspaper in Dublin in an attempt to encourage a new nationality in Ireland that would include Irishmen of all traditions and religions. Significantly, they called their newspaper, founded in 1842, the Nation. Its founders were Thomas Davis, John Blake Dillon and Charles Gavan Duffy, and they represented the two main religious and racial factions in Ireland. Davis was the main philosopher of the group who grew up around the Nation and who came to be known as "Young Ireland". Davis had a vision of a new nationality for Ireland, "a nationality of the spirit as well as of the letter.. which would establish internal unity and external independence." [9] It would be a nationality that would include all religious groups, those of

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9. Thomas Davis, Essays and Poems, (Dublin, 1945), quoted in Lyons, F.S.L., Ireland Since the Famine, (London, 1971), p. 34.

Celtic and Anglo-Saxon backgrounds alike, in a common nationality based not primarily on political unity, but on a shared language, literature and history. The Young Irelanders believed that the cultivation of such a sense of nationality was essential to the survival of an Ireland which they feared was fast becoming anglicized by centuries of British domination. The pages of the Nation were filled with editorials and articles, poems and stories, preaching a common Irish nationality. The newspaper sought to inspire Irish men and women with memories of the great Celtic past which was the common heritage of all, regardless of religion or racial origin. The era of "the Island of Saints and Scholars", as Ireland was once called, was the inspiration for a new nationality based on a glorious past. Thomas Davis took on the mantle of poet of Young Ireland's new nationality, and expressed his vision in a song that is still popular today:

> When boyhood's fire was in my blood,
> I read of ancient freemen;
> Of Greece and Rome who bravely stood,
> Three hundred men and three men.
> And then I prayed I yet might see
> Her fetters rent in twain:
> And Ireland, long a province, be
> A Nation once again.

The Young Irelanders thrived on such fare and sought to inspire their fellow-countrymen with a vision of an Irish nation that had room for all. On a practical level, the Nation proposed a new history of Ireland, and divided the work among a number of their writers and contributors. The main thrust of the movement was that the elitist Protestant nation of the eighteenth century had failed, as had the separatist republicanism of the United Irishmen, to unite the Irish in any way which mattered.

Only the creation of a new sense of Irish nationality could unite the Irish of all backgrounds and prepare the way for political unity and religious toleration. That was to be the mission of Young Ireland.

The winning of an Irish Parliament, free of the restrictions and corruption that had characterized the pre-Union assembly, was seen as a desirable goal by Young Ireland and they willingly gave their support to the O'Connell Repeal campaign. But by 1846, differences had divided the two movements. Young Ireland considered O'Connell's reliance on Catholics a step away from their idea of nationality. They wanted Repeal to reach the landlord class and the Protestants of the north, as well as the Catholic peasant who was the backbone of the movement. But Daniel O'Connell was simply too much of a Catholic to accept Young Ireland's ideas, and his followers were soon leveling sectarian accusations of disloyalty against the Young Ireland movement and their newspaper. The sudden death of Thomas Davis in 1845 was a bad blow to any hope of reconciliation, the cornerstone of Young Ireland's ideology. Davis was the one Young Irelander O'Connell respected and consulted. Without him, the rift between the two movements widened. Young Ireland had a very different idea of Ireland's future than O'Connell, now old and impatient with the young men who questioned the great Liberator of Ireland. Surrounded by sycophants and too aware of his own great achievements, O'Connell did little to keep the sympathy and support of Young Ireland after Davis' death.

From 1845, famine stalked Ireland, growing more terrible each year. By 1848 over a million people had died of starvation and disease, another million at least had fled the country. The Great Famine brought

political affairs in Ireland to a crisis point. The Union was blamed for the shocking state of the Irish economy and the extent of the suffering and death brought by the seventh famine since 1800.[10] As Young Ireland moved away from the narrow sectionalism of the Repeal movement, it began to experience internal division also. A section of the movement had come under the influence of James Fintan Lalor, a young radical who saw the land issue as the vital concern that had to be dealt with in Ireland. Believing that the ownership of the land was vested in the Irish people, he demanded major land reforms to benefit the peasantry and alleviate the constant poverty of the Irish Catholic tenantry. Under the guidance of John Mitchel, a fiery Ulster Presbyterian, who had joined Young Ireland after Davis' death, a section of the movement moved to a radical, republican position, not unlike that of the United Irishmen. The more moderate element, led by Charles Gavan Duffy, rejected the extreme views of the Mitchel faction who sought to impose their ideas by violent revolution if need be. Although Duffy and the moderates were prepared to consider violent resistance in an extreme emergency, they were not in agreement with Mitchel who claimed that the emergency had arrived with the Famine. In May 1847 O'Connell died and the Repeal movement carried on its conflict with Young Ireland free of whatever moderating control the Liberator had retained.

Young Ireland had by now become almost completely involved in politics to the exclusion of their literary and cultural cause, and in January 1847 had set up a rival organization to the Repeal movement. It was called the Irish Confederation and in it, Mitchel carried on with

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[10] Kee, p.173; Adams, p. 183.

his attempts to turn Young Irelanders into United Irishmen. By December, Duffy and the moderates had had enough and Mitchel and his followers were expelled from the Confederation. January 1848 saw the passing of a resolution in the Confederation supporting constitutional means to redress Ireland's wrongs. But things changed quickly in this "Year of Revolutions". In February, the French monarchy was overthrown and from that time on even the moderates like Duffy spoke with a new vehemence about the responsibility of England for the situation in Ireland, where thousands of men, women and children were dying throughout the country. It would have been very difficult not to have been radicalized by the experience. In March, two Young Ireland leaders were arrested for making seditious speeches, but were acquitted at their trials. Under a new Act, however, Mitchel was convicted of Treason-Felony and sent into exile. In spite of an upsurge in revolutionary fervour among their supporters, Young Ireland's leadership were still reluctant to resort to violence, and they chose not to move in Mitchel's support. July was the critical month. Duffy was arrested along with the Secretary of the Confederation, Thomas D'Arcy McGee, although McGee's case was dismissed when the jury refused to indict him. The British authorities, convinced that rebellion was inevitable, suspended the Habeas Corpus Act in Ireland on July 25. Young Ireland saw this as a declaration of war. Either they submitted to imprisonment and exile, or they had to fight. They chose the latter course at a secret meeting of their Directory in Dublin.

In the event, the long-awaited rebellion was sadly disappointing to the revolutionaries. There was little or no public support for such a

move, and the country was in no state to rise after three years of famine. The middle-class background of the rebel leaders made it difficult for them to successfully organize and execute a revolution and the attempt petered out in a few days. The leaders were arrested and tried. Some were imprisoned. Others evaded capture and fled, either to France or to the United States. The quest for a new nationality for Ireland was rudely interrupted. In the long-term, Davis was to inspire all future Irish nationalists, whether constitutional or republicn, throughhhis writings in the Nation.[11] The concept of a broadly=based nationalism in Ireland was to receive further study in later generations. But from 1848 the centre of Irish revolutionary nationalism shifted to North America. The Fenians were to claim descent from Young Ireland's radical wing. But it was to be in British North America that the Young Ireland ideal of a new nationality was to bear fruit first. Because of the peculiar conditions existing in that area in the middle of the nineteenth century, Irish Catholics would give a new nation a new ideology - a new nationality.

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[11] Lyons, p. 101.

CHAPTER TWO

THE EXILED GAELS

Long before leaving Ireland, Irish Protestants had embraced British nationality as their own. The decision to accept the Act of Union of 1801 had determined their future loyalty and caused them no major problems in adapting to the new life in British North America. It was not so easy for Irish Catholics. Their nationality was that of the old country, not the new. The attempt by Young Ireland to creat a broad nationality for all Irish people had been aborted by the events of 1848, and Irish Catholic immigrants arrived in British America unsure of how to settle into the new circumstances of life in a Protestant, British land. The old ideas of loyalty would be challenged and examined critically by the non-Irish population. What the Irish Catholics needed was leadership that would give direction and guidance in the search for a new context in which to find an identity. That role fell almost entirely to the Irish Catholic journalists who, from the earliest days of Irish Catholic immigration to British America, had been publishing journals, inspired by O'Connell, designed to give the new arrivals a link with each other and with Ireland.

It is impossible to differentiate in census and immigration statistics between Irish Catholics and Protestants, so the term "Irish" is used in this chapter to identify all those of Irish birth, regardless of creed. Both groups suffered from the experience of emigration, though the trauma was, perhaps, greater for the Irish Catholics, given their view of home and change.

I. The Emigrants

The Irish did not have a tradition of emigration, other than for seasonal work in England and Scotland for the men. Every year they made the journey across the Irish Sea to help with the planting and harvesting. This was an essential part of their economy since their own land could never provide them with even the basics of life. But it was only with the end of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe after 1815 that emigration from the island began in earnest, and forrthe next twenty years the majority of those emigrating to North America were Protestants from northern Ireland who had been displaced by Catholics willing to pay higher rents. After 1828, when laws governing ships involved in transporting emigrants were changed, more Irish Catholics started to make the journey. Between 1828 and 1848, more than 814,000 people left Ireland for North America, a little more than half going to British North America.[1]

There were a number of attempts made to organize emigration of the Irish on a large scale, mostly by private commercial companies. These efforts met with major problems as the colonies entered a period of economic stagnation in the 1830's. The most successful settlement was one financed by the British Government in 1825. Peter Robinson of Upper Canada was commissioned to bring almost two thousand Irish Catholics to what became the Peterborough area of the Province. By the end of that year, 1,878 settlers had arrived in the area, mostly from the

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[1] Adams, W.F., Ireland and Irish Emigration to the New World from 1815 to the Famine, (New York, 1932), p. 413-4. Data derived from charts.

Cork area.[2] Families and individuals continued to make the journey across the Atlantic, encouraged by the success of, and financially helped by, earlier emigrants. By the early 1840's, the Irish accounted for over 10% of the population of the United Provinces of Canada.[3] In the Census figures for 1842, there were 82,728 people of Irish birth in Upper Canada, while Lower Canada in 1844 had 43,982 of Irish birth.[4] By 1851, the Irish-born were the largest ethnic group in 31 of the 42 counties of Upper Canada, as well as in each of the five major urban areas of Toronto, Hamilton, Kingston, Bytown and London. The 176,267 Irish were at least 10%, and often as high as 25% of the population of these counties. In the cities they accounted for as much as a third of the citizens.[5]

The situation in Lower Canada was somewhat different. Whereas in Upper Canada 87% of the Irish lived in rural areas, in Lower Canada 35% lived in Montreal and Quebec. The rest were scattered through the counties of the Province, generally numbering less than 7% of the population. In 13 of the 36 counties, they were less than 1%, and only in Ottawa county did they rise above 14%.[6] Only in Montreal did the Irish Catholics live in sufficient concentration to ensure representation of

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[2]Pammett, H.T., "Assisted Emigration from Ireland to Upper Canada under Peter Robinson", Ontario History, Vol. 31, 1936, p. 180.

[3]Nolte, William, "The Irish In Canada, 1815-1867", (PhD thesis, Maryland), 1975, p. 26.

[4]Census of Canada, 1851-52, (John Lovell, Quebec), 1853, Vol. 1,p.xxi-xxii.

[5]Ibid., data derived from Appendix I.

[6]Ibid., data derived from Appendix III.

their interests in the Assembly. This Census year of 1851 was to be a turning-point in Irish migration to British America, since after that year the majority of immigrants from the British Isles were either English or Scots, rather than Irish. The Census of 1861 reflected the changes. By that year the Irish-born as a percentage of the population had fallen from 18.5% to 13.6% in Upper Canada, and from 5.8% to 4.5% in Lower Canada.[7] By the time of Confederation, Irish Catholics accounted for less than 20% of the population in Upper Canada.[8] In Lower Canada, the Irish remained the largest ethnic group after the French-Canadians, although their numbers were falling in comparison to English and Scots. In the two main centres of population in the United Provinces, Toronto and Montreal, Irish Catholics accounted for about a quarter of the citizens in each city.[9]

The Maritime Provinces also had their share of Irish Catholic immigration. The Irish outnumbered the English and Scots in Prince Edward Island after 1841. In Nova Scotia, half the population in 1827 were Irish, though mostly Protestant.[10] Immigration had almost ceased

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[7] Census of Canada, 1860-1, (S.B. Foote, Quebec), 1863, Vol.1, p. 43, 78.

[8] Careless, J.M.S., (ed), The Pre-Confederation Premiers, (Toronto, 1980), p. 18.

[9] Conner, Daniel, "Irish-Canadians: Image and Self-image, 1847-1870", (M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia), 1976, p. 2.

[10] Davin, Nicholas Flood, The Irishman in Canada, (Toronto, 1877), p. 151.

by the 1850's, however, and in 1860 89% of the population were native-born.[11] In New Brunswick, the Irish formed an important part of the community. Although immigration here too had practically ceased by the late 1850's, (in 1857 the majority were native-born[12]), in 1871 the Census showed that the Irish accounted for 100,634 of the 285,594 inhabitants of the Province.[13]

The Irish Catholics who settled in New Brunswick were by no means all poverty-stricken and diseased, as the later stereotype might suggest. They included men like Robert Cooney of Dublin, who arrived in the Province in 1824. In 1828 he was asked to use his influence with the Irish Catholic electorate to ensure the election of a candidate for the Assembly. This he did and the man was elected, an indication of the influence educated Irishmen could have over their illiterate countrymen, and of the power of the Irish Catholic vote as early as the late 1820's.[14] By 1850 an Irish Catholic from Donegal, Francis McPhelim, was elected to the Assembly and he became the first Catholic appointed to the Executive Council of the Province.[15]

Irish Catholicsiin the Canadas were also respectable members of

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[11] MacNutt, W.S., The Atlantic Provinces: The Emergence of a Colonial Society, 1712-1857, (Toronto, 1965), p. 258.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Census of Canada, 1870-1, (I.B. Taylor, Ottawa), 1873, Vol.1, p. 333, 424.

[14] Halpenny, F.G. & Hamelin, J., Dictionary of Canadian Biography, (Toronto, 1976), Vol. IX, p. 154-5.

[15] Ibid., p. 527-8.

society and some, like Dominick Daly, reached positions of political power unimaginable at that period in Ireland itself. Daly was known as the "permanent secretary" of the Provinces of Canada owing to the length of time he held public office. Born in Ardfry, Daly served under various Governors and Governments from 1823 until 1848, when he was finally dismissed. He went on to become Lieutenant-Governor of Prince Edward Island in 1854, where he remained until 1859. He was always a popular and able official and did much to remove the stigma of disloyalty from the Irish Catholic population.[16] This was the main focus of the many attacks made on Irish Catholics in British America. The Protestant Irish had made their decision on nationality with the Act of Union in Ireland in 1801. They had chosen British nationality in preference to a Catholic-dominated Irish nation. The Catholics, who were suspected of disloyalty because they had not made the same decision, were attacked by various bodies, most noticeably the Loyal Orange Lodges.

The Orange Order had reached British North America within five years of its founding in Ireland in 1795. Soldiers in Montreal formed the first lodge in 1800 and the first civilian group organized in the Ottawa Valley in 1803.[17] In 1818 there was an Orange march in York on July 12. That same year, soldiers started a lodge in St. John, New Brunswick that operated until at least 1831, when the first civilian lodge in that city was founded.[18] By the mid-1820's, Upper Canada and

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[16] Ibid., p. 189-92.

[17] Houston, C.J.,& Smythe, W.J., The Sash Canada Wore: A Historical Geography of the Orange Order in Canada, (Toronto, 1980), p. 16-18.

[18] Ibid., p. 69.

New Brunswick were the two main centres of Orangeism in the Provinces. For obvious reasons, the Order never gained the same strength in Lower Canada that it knew in the western Province; nor did the other Maritime Provinces supply the fertile breeding-ground for the Order that New Brunswick did, until after Confederation. It may well be that the main reason for the success of the Order in the two areas was the traditional loyalism which was a hallmark of the two Provinces.

The Order was not without its opponents in the days of its growth. The Anglican population saw it as a low-church, low-class, particularly Irish organization. And, of course, there was the opposition of the Catholic Church. The Order itself was very loosely organized until the arrival of Ogle Gowan in 1829. Gowan was from Wexford in Ireland and he had been involved in the Orange Order since 1818. When he arrived in Upper Canada he immediately set about a proper structuring of the basically autonomous lodges already existing there. However, a split within the Orange ranks restricted growth for fifteen years, and it was not until the 1850's that the number of new lodges grew significantly.[19] Between 1854 and 1860, almost a third of all the new lodges authorized in the nineteenth century came into being. From an average number of ten new lodges per year in the early 1850's, the number peaked at almost 130 in 1858.[20] It is clear that the Order in British America shared the anti-Catholicism of its Irish parent. In the 1830's Orange gangs terror-

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[19] Ibid., p. 25.

[20] Ibid., p.24-5.

ized Catholic settlers in the Peterborough area, burning buildings and shooting at Catholics to intimidate them into leaving the area. This kind of open aggression changed over the years as the Order attempted, with much success, to attract more respectable people of influence into their ranks. The anti-Catholic attitudes of the Order were primarily based on political convictions, since they believed that Catholics could never be loyal to the Crown as long as they held an allegiance to a foreign power - the Papacy. That allegiance made Catholics disloyal and a threat to the British Protestant nature of British North America.

The Catholics, for their part, always felt under threat from the Orangemen. There was even a fear in not knowing exactly how many Orangemen there were. Gowan claimed in 1833 that there were 11,243 members of the Order. The following year, he claimed 12,853. After that year it is almost impossible to be sure of exact membership figures, but various Orange leaders were not slow to exaggerate greatly, claiming up to a quarter of a million members in Canada alone.[21] This uncertainty exacerbated Irish Catholic fears of their Protestant neighbours. These, in turn, helped to perpetuate the Protestant idea of the Catholic as a disloyal, factious creature they had always supposed him to be. In the violence of the lumber camps, the many election riots, St. Patrick's Day riots and in the misery and destitution of the Irish Catholic ghettoes of Montreal, the Protestant claimed to find the true Catholic, full of superstition, violence, drink and rebellion. In many ways, the real

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[21] Ibid., p. 84-5.

seriousness of this image was not understood until after the immigration of the Famine years. Even during the terrible cholera epidemic of 1832, when immigrant-borne fever decimated not only the immigrants, but also the populations of Montreal and Quebec, the antagonism generated was directed at the authorities in England and the landlords in Ireland rather than at the immigrants themselves.

The 1840's saw the terrible exodus of the Irish fleeing from the horrors of the Great Famine, which lasted from 1845-48. Emigration, which had been proceeding slowly since 1815, and which had actually declined in volume in the first years of the decade, suddenly became a flood that North America was hardly prepared for. British America received large numbers of poverty-stricken and diseased men, women and children at the ports of Montreal and Quebec. The immigration sheds there were not designed to take care of the numbers which poured into them in the last half of the decade. In the twenty years from 1828 to 1845 more than 700,000 people left Ireland for North America.[22] In the decade from 1845 that number was over two million.[23] Canada had been able to absorb the immigrants before this flood arrived, sooner or later they had found jobs or else had moved on to the United States. But the Famine years in Ireland coincided with the end of the "limitless land" myth of Canada. Farmers could not afford to employ immigrants as in the past and there was no land left to give to the newcomers.

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[22]Adams, p. 413-4.

[23]Lyons, F.S.L., Ireland Since the Famine, (London, 1971), p. 32.

This coincidence of events resulted in thousands of Irish Catholics being unable to work and hanging around the cities looking for food and shelter. To many British Americans, it seemed as though they were simply not interested in working. As one historian has said:

> Before the massive influx of 1847 Canadians were prepared to greet all immigrants from the British Isles as countrymen and asserted that initial poverty was no bar to success in the province....Assuming that farmers were eager for labourers in the countryside and land was available for those who saved a small sum as labourers, observers in Canada West concluded that the poor who hung around the cities must be idlers who lacked the initiative to seek out ready opportunities. Since the entering poor were predominantly Irish, it seemed that a disproportionate number of the Irish were idlers....In the wake of the famine migration, the faith in the alchemy the New World could work on the downtrodden of the Old was muted by a suspicion that some people would be poor and deservedly remain so even in the New World and that poverty might at times be legitimately identified with nationality. 24

This growing tendancy to identify indolence and lack of initiative with the Irish Catholic immigrants was one which the newcomers would have to come to terms with. Greatly complicating their situation was the fact that lack of initiative was actually a characteristic of the Irish Catholics, especially those who emigrated in the nineteenth century.

The most important fact in the Irish Catholic immigrant's mind was that he was an <u>emigrant</u>. He was someone with a past, a country, family and traditions left forever behind. The Irish have a natural tendency to consider all those away from Ireland as exiles, whatever

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[24] Parr, G.J., "The Welcome and the Wake: Attitudes in Canada West toward the Irish Famine Migration", <u>Ontario History</u>, Vol. 66, 1974, p. 113.

the reason for the absence.[25] This idea was embodied in their language. There was no word in the Irish language for "traveller"; the Irish equivalents were "deorai", "dibeartach" and "direabhach", which respectively mean, "exile", "one who is banished" and "one who is homeless". When the emigrant spoke of his departure from Ireland, he would use the phrase "Dob eigean dom imeacht", or "I had to leave". He could have used a more neutral phrase, like "Chuaigh me thar lar", or "I went abroad"; but what he was saying was that his departure was not of his own will, it was forced on him by fate or circumstances, hence it was exile. This attitude was true of Irish Catholic immigrants no matter what reason they may have had for leaving Ireland, and it is found among immigrants throughout the nineteenth century.

This sense of exile was independent of language and was a characteristic of Irish Catholics in British America. A fine example of this is found in the words of an Irishman in 1855. He was before a judge in Toronto, who asked him, "have you no home?", to which the man sadly replied, "Sure and I live in the county Kerry, your honor, when I'm home".[26] Such a concept was further promoted by the Irish Catholic religious world view. Catholicism emphasized communal identity rather than individualism, submission to authority rather than personal responsibility, and the value of tradition and custom rather than innovation and initiative. Such a view of life suited the Celtic temperament

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[25]The main work in this area is: Miller, K.A., Boling, B. & Doyle, D.N., "Emigrants and Exiles: Irish cultures and Irish emigration to North America, 1790-1922", Irish Historical Studies, Vol. 22, 1980, pp. 97-125.

[26]Leader, (Toronto), 19 June 1855.

perfectly. These two factors alone can explain the apparent apathy and indifference shown by Irish Catholics in the face of disease, unemployment and rejection. All these things were to be borne as the will of God, according to Catholic teaching. Irish Catholics used a prayer to Mary in which they said:

> To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears....And after this, our exile, show us... Jesus.

For the Catholic, this very life was an exile, a valley of tears where all suffering was to be expected and borne, since it was the will of God and one's reward depended on how one submitted to that will without resistance. After the Famine, the Irish Catholic immigrants saw that catastrophe as the will of God, sending them out as exiles to bring the light of Catholicism to the benighted Protestants of British North America.[27] Even this was but an echo of an older Irish tradition that saw the Irish monks of the tenth century who went to Scotland and mainland Europe as "exiles for Christ".[28]

The effect of this view of life and suffering on the Irish Catholic psyche was a source of dismay to Irish leaders, lay and clerical alike. Daniel O'Connell, the great Liberator himself, described the Irish Catholic peasants as "crawling slaves".[29] An Irish priest said in 1848 of the Irish Catholic immigrants: "our people have, and will, for a long time, have many of the vices of slaves".[30] Thus it was that the

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[27] Miller, et al, p. 102.

[28] Ibid., p. 107. [29] Ibid. [30] Ibid., p. 99.

Famine Irish were found to lack initiative or ambition:

> The emigrant infected in body and degraded in mind... has not the heart, has not the will, to exert himself.[31]

The Irish Catholics, especially those of the Great Famine migration, had experienced an event that most Canadians and Maritimers could not hope to comprehend. These people had seen their wives, children and friends die of starvation in Ireland and on the coffin ships. Even after landing in British America, the death rate was very high, as many as 30%, or 20,000 of those who landed at Quebec in 1847 died within a year.[32] The rest were faced with "No Irish Need Apply" in the new land of opportunity. Most of the Famine Irish, those who would be central to the events of the 1860's, were from areas of high rural crime, where agrarian violence against landlords and figures of authority was a tradition going back generations. In the new land, these activities were to be a feature of the early settlers, as well as of the navvies in the lumber camps. The conservative Catholicism of the Irish resisted change strongly and when faced with inevitable and overwhelming change in a new country, were bound to find it difficult to adjust.

One result of the exile concept was an added bitterness against the perceived cause of their exile, and for many that cause was England. For if exile was compulsive, then someone was to blame. Although the landlords were a chief focus of hatred, England was a useful scape-goat

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[31] Macdonald, Norman, Canada: Immigration and Colonization; 1841-1903, (Toronto, 1966), p. 61.

[32] Duncan, Kenneth, "Irish Famine Immigration and the Social Structure of Canada West", in Mann, W.E., (ed), Canada: A Sociological Profile, (Copp Clerk, 1968), p. 4.

and a focus for the hurt and impotent rage many must have felt in the face of so much suffering and loss. The high crime rate and the raucous attitude of Irish labourers can be explained just as easily by the sense of alienation and loss they experienced on leaving Ireland as by dissatisfaction they may have had with forms of government, or disloyalty. In British North America, Irish Catholics were forced to come to terms with living under the British Crown in a land where their former grievances were no longer valid. Irish Catholics in British America had civil and religious liberty, and their main concern was to find a way to settle into the new society with as little upset and loss of identity as possible. This they did by adapting many of the social structures of Ireland to the new surroundings of British North America. In general, the Catholics tended to concentrate in the cities, rather than in rural areas. This had many causes: a lack of familiarity with North American agricultural methods; a rejection of life on the land in the wake of the Famine trauma; a willingness to work for wages on the railways and in the lumber camps, gained from the trips to England and Scotland in the old days. But one of the main reasons for the rise of Irish Catholic ghettoes was the need for social contact among the Irish immigrants. In Ireland, they had lived in villages from whence they went out to work on the land, often working together in groups.[33] That was impossible in the conditions of rural life in British America, where the farm holdings were widely separated and social contact was minimal. The loneliness of such a life was completely contrary to the

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[33] Ibid.

Irish character. Instead, they made the city ghetto mirror the life of an Irish village, a community living in close proximity to each other for the purpose of social contact. This was very much in keeping with the Irish Catholic psyche that distrusted change of any kind and looked for the familiar as security in an insecure world. Rather than being a repudiation of traditional values, the shift to the towns of British America by Irish Catholic immigrants was in fact an attempt to retain those values in a new form.

II. Irish Catholic Journalists

Leadership in the Irish Catholic community in British North America wassupplied mainly by journalists. They were the educated among the Irish, the traditional spokesmen for the Catholics since the days of the Nation in Dublin. Indeed, Irish Catholic journalists had been a part of British American life from the early days of O'Connell's emancipation campaign. It was the Liberator who had given Irish Catholics the inspiration to speak out and organize; and it was through the newspapers that this was done. In British America, the Irish Catholics, especially after the Famine migration, were in need of sympathetic and articulate leaders. They found themselves in an alien culture, among a predominantly Protestant population. Although the immigrants avoided much of the discrimination suffered by their countrymen in the United States, where nativist activity was a constant source of anxiety among Irish Catholic immigrants, and where competition for jobs focused a

great deal of attention and resentment on the newcomers, Irish Catholics still had difficulties in British America. They had to find a context in which they could find an identity in the new land. They generally found little discrimination against them on economic grounds, since there was little competition for the jobs they found.[34] But in many ways the absence of severe discrimination made it harder to find the necessary context. In Ireland, their main sense of identity lay in being a persecuted and deprived group in their own land. This was very much a function of the Celtic-Catholic psyche discussed above, where suffering and hardship could actually be a source of identity and security. But in British America they quickly found that the old way of seeing themselves was no longer valid, and apart from an occasional Orange-Green clash, they had little of the traditional conflicts by which to build up a sense of identity. The Irish Catholic newspapers played an important role here. They had to show the immigrants that they were not alone in the new world; they educated the immigrants in the day-to-day realities of British America.

From the early 1820's, the Irish Catholic community had its own newspapers to read. These journals were their link with Ireland, containing news and stories from home, as well as poetry and fiction on Irish subjects. They also catered to an increasingly aware political electorate. The rise of Irish Catholics journals in North America paralleled O'Connell's rise in Ireland. Throughout the period from 1820 to 1850, the Irish Catholic newspapers gave their support to the various reform movements in the British American Provinces, primarily as an

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[34]Duncan, p. 1.

extension of their support for O'Connell's campaigns for political reform in Ireland.

The other main subject of Irish Catholic editorials concerned relations with the Orange Order. It was the frequent Orange-Green clashes that perpetuated the feuds of the old country in the new, and kept alive the accusations of Irish Catholic disloyalty. Although the clashes were often bloody, their cause was not always religious. The conditions under which the Irish labourers worked were often extremely brutal, and violence was an escape from the hardship and drudgery of the lumber camps and railway sites. What at first seemed to be merely a continuation of old conflicts, however, soon became a native British American issue, as Irish Catholics, encouraged by their new experience of political activism under O'Connell, began to speak out for their rights. Their press went along completely with this development. The press educated the immigrants into a sense of awareness, following the example of O'Connell. This was the really valuable work of the press in the first half of the nineteenth century: creating a sense of self-consciousness among Irish Catholics. They did not consider themselves as having a British nationality, and yet the new freedoms enjoyed in British America made much of their traditional national self-consciousness redundant, since it was based on a struggle and conflict that was apparently unnecessary in the British American Provinces. What was needed, and what the Irish Catholic journalists ultimately had to supply, was a new sense of nationality for Irish Catholics in British North America.

In Lower Canada, one of the earliest journals catering to Irish Catholics was the Irish Vindicator, published by Dr. Daniel Tracey.

Tracey allied himself with the French-Canadian radicals under Louis-Joseph Papineau; and, as the radicals moved closer to republicanism in the early 1830's, Tracey tried to convince the Irish Catholics to support them. In 1832 he was elected to the Assembly for Montreal West, but died of cholera before he could take his seat.[35] His place as editor of the Vindicator was taken by another Irish Catholic, Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan, who continued the alliance with Papineau through the rebellion of 1837. Although O'Callaghan was a firm supporter of the rebellion, it does not appear that he had much support among the Irish Catholics, who were conspicuous by their absence from the conflict.[36] Preferring to follow the moderate leaders of the reform movement, the Irish Catholics of Upper and Lower Canada demonstrated that they had, indeed, been prepared to remain loyal once their grievances were addressed in the new world.

Their spokesman in Upper Canada was Francis Collins, who, in 1821 began to publish the Canadian Freeman in York. He was a strong supporter of the reform movement in that Province and part of Collins' motivation in rejecting the extreme ideas of the radicals may have been the character of the radical leader, William Lyon Mackenzie, a Scots Presbyterian who had very little that was good to say about Irish Catholics. Indeed, he had resisted the Peterborough settlement of 1825

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[35]Nolte, pp. 188, 198-200.

[36]Malone, D., (ed), Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. VII, (New York, 1934), p. 613.

because the settlers were "disloyal" Irish Catholics.[37] As Mackenzie himself moved away from constitutional methods and became increasingly republican in his thinking, Collins remained committed to moderation in the winning of reforms. In 1832 the Canadian Freeman organized a petition of loyalty from Irish Catholics of the city of York in opposition to Mackenzie, who was ejected from a public meeting that same year by "200 persons of the Roman Church".[38] Like Daniel Tracey, Collins was imprisoned for his criticism of the Upper Canada administration. He was stringent in his attacks on the oligarchic nature of the government of the Province and seemed set to make a long career in journalism, and possibly in politics, when, again like Tracey, he was stricken by cholera and died in 1834.[39]

With Collins dead, the leadership of the Irish Catholics in Upper Canada fell to Charles Donleavy of Toronto. In 1837 Donleavy had been in agreement with the aims of the reformers, but deprecated the use of force. In this he was probably closer to expressing the general sympathies of Irish Catholics than either Tracey or O'Callaghan. Donleavy was a keen follower of Daniel O'Connell and saw the campaign for responsible government as a natural area for Irish Catholic involvement. Throughout the 1830's and 1840's, he was the leading spokeman for

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[37] Pammett, p. 208; Nolte, p. 137-8.

[38] Senior, Hereward, "Ogle Gowan, Orangeism, and the Immigrant Question, 1830-33", Ontario History, Vol. 66, 1974, p. 204.

[39] Canadian Newspapers on Microfilm, (Canadian Library Association, Ottawa), 1959, ONT 2.

Irish Catholic opinion in Canada; but after the granting of responsible government in 1848, his political influence waned.[40] It was not until a new generation of Irish Catholic journalists came on the scene in the late 1850's that the Irish Catholic community found a distinctly Irish expression of their views and asperations. Ten years earlier, a sharp division between Catholic and Protestant had developed in the Canadian press, ironically led, not by Irishmen, but by two Scots: George Brown of the Toronto Globe, and George Clerk, a Catholic convert, of the Montreal True Witness. These men carried on a bitter sectarian feud throughout the 1840's and 1850's, calling on the vilest of sectarian invective in their assaults on the other's religion and on decency. During these years, Clerk was the mouthpiece of the Catholic hierarchy in Canada, wielding considerable influence with Irish Catholics. Brown was the arch-fiend, the incarnation of Protestant bigotry and menace for the Catholics of Canada. His position within the reform movement greatly upset the Irish Catholics who were loyal to that cause, in the O'Connell tradition. He was the prime reason for Irish withdrawal from the reform camp after 1848.

In the Maritimes, two Irish Catholic journalists made their mark in the 1840's and 1850's. Edward Whelan, born in Ballina, County Mayo, went to Nova Scotia in 1831 where he was apprenticed to Joseph Howe, foremost politician-journalist of his day. In 1842 he founded a new journal for Irish Catholics in Halifax, the Register, which supported the cause of repeal in Ireland. The next year he was in Charlottetown,

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[40] Walker, Franklin A., "The Political Opinions of Upper Canadian Catholics", Canadian Historical Association Reports, 1955, p. 81-2.

Prince Edward Island, where he founded the Palladium, dedicated to the cause at the centre of Island politics: the fight of the tenants against the absentee landlords. It was a cause that Whelan and the Irish Catholics could well understand. The paper was strongly anti-English in tone, which may have limited its readership, and it ceased publication in 1845. In 1846 Whelan was elected to the Assembly, a clear opponent of the Island's ruling oligarchy. In August 1847 he started yet another newspaper, the Examiner, in which he refrained from any comment on Ireland and Irish affairs, except during the period of the Young Ireland rebellion in 1848, which he supported. This may account for the fact that the Examiner was closed down by the authorities for just a year, from February 1849 until January 1850. After it reopened, Whelan again concentrated on Island affairs, especially the campaign for responsible government, which was finally granted in 1851. Whelan was appointed to the Executive Council in that year, as well as being appointed Queen's Printer. While he held this position, the Examiner ceased publication; and when it resumed in 1854, it dealt with internal provincial affairs almost exclusively until the other British Provinces intruded in the Confederation campaign of 1864.[41]

The second major Irish Catholic journalist in the Maritimes before 1858 was Timothy Warren Anglin of County Cork in Ireland. He arrived in St. John, New Brunswick in the summer of 1849 and within a matter of weeks had begun to publish a newspaper for Irish Catholics of the Province, the Morning Freeman. It was said that Anglin had been a

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[41]Halpenny & Hamelin, DCB, Vol. IX, p. 828-834.

Young Irelander himself before coming to New Brunswick, and he did imply an involvement without ever stating clearly what the nature of his involvement had been.[42] However, whatever his background, Anglin traded off his reputation as a Young Ireland rebel to gather support for his newspaper among the Irish Catholics of St. John. It has been suggested that Anglin was actually brought to the Province to start the Morning Freeman, sponsored by the Catholic community of St. John.[43] That, too, is unclear, although the speed with which the paper was founded does suggest a base of support not normal for a newly-arrived immigrant.

The importance of Anglin's Morning News was that it was the only newspaper in the Province catering to the needs of the Irish Catholics, and therefore Anglin's influence on their political affiliations and sense of identity in the new land was profound. Anglin was to guide the Irish Catholics of New Brunswick throughout the quarter century following his arrival there. His main concerns during the first decade of the paper's life was to establish himself as the spokesman for his fellow-countrymen, and to decide what stand to take on the important issues facing New Brunswick in the 1850's. Anglin was, like most Irish Catholics, a conservative by nature, and he was impressed only by practical arguments and projects. His primary goal was the economic growth of the Province, and especially St. John. In the current

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[42]Baker, William M., Timothy Warren Anglin, 1822-96, (Toronto, 1977), p. 10.

[43]Ibid., p. 14.

middle-class fashion, Anglin believed in laisse-faire economics, and vigorously opposed any form of tariff or interference with free trade, whether between individuals or countries. The Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 between the United States and British North America was warmly welcomed by Anglin.[44] Coupled with this economic goal was the development of the railways in New Brunswick. Like many others, Anglin saw that railways were vital to economic growth, and he campaigned for both an Intercolonial railway linking New Brunswick with Canada, and a rail link between his Province and Maine to take advantage of the trade with the United States created and supported by the Reciprocity Treaty. In 1850 he had been one of the founding members of a committee organized to promote this latter railway route, named the European and North American Railway, and it was his pet project for over a decade. In a choice between the Intercolonial and the E.&N.A.R., Anglin preferred the latter, since he thought it far more important to maintain trading links with the Americans than with the far-off Canadians.[45]

Still, for all his middle-class ideas, Anglin was a true Irish Catholic, believing that every aspect of life, including politics and journalism, ought to be governed by one's religion:

> The great vital principle that should ever guide, govern, actuate, and controul man in his family, in the workshop, the market place, the court of justice, the public meeting,

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44. Ibid., p.29.

45 Ibid., p. 30.

> and the place of amusement...causing him to refer every thought, word, and deed of his whole life to God. 46

He also shared that characteristic of the Irish Catholic which we have noted earlier, a belief in the essential misery of life on this earth and the inability of man to overcome it:

> The belief underlying the Irish Catholic view of the cause of social evils is that man, due to original sin, is fallen; as a result, he has many frailties and suffers grave hardships not susceptible of great transformation by mere mortal efforts. 47

Anglin's general attitude to his poorer co-religionists was patronising in a manner typical of the Victorian middle-class, and of the general type of Irish Catholic journalists then operating in British America. He saw it as his duty to lead them away from error and political evil; a duty imposed on him by his education and position in society. A good example of this patronising attitude is Anglin's opinion on the "agrarian myth". He firmly believed that life "on the land" was the healthiest, physically, morally and spiritually. Nothing shows his basic middle-class background and lack of comprehension of lower-class Irish Catholic thought than his inability to understand why labouring classes would not embrace the rural life, something Anglin himself would never have dreamed of doing:

> With an infatuation that can scarcely be accounted for, thousands of men cling to the wretched life of towns and cities...as if the free air of the country were poison, and labour in the woods and fields were the greatest slavery. 48

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[46] Morning Freeman, (St. John), 16 Mr. 1869.

[47] Quoted in Baker, p. 22.

[48] Morning Freeman, 2 Feb. 1860.

Like the majority of editors of his day, Anglin also indulged, whatever his Catholic ideals may have been, in the most insulting and scurrilous language in attacking other editors or opposing politicians. The style of the day was for sectarian and party conflicts to be aired in the pages of the newspapers, which took a totally partisan role on every conceivable issue. This was the situation as the 1850's drew to an end. Anglin was secure in his leadership of the Irish Catholics of New Brunswick, at home in the most venomous journalistic and political circles. Whatever his true background in Young Ireland may have been, that was long behind him and seemed destined to stay in the past. But in 1857 another Irish Catholic journalist joined the ranks in British North America: one whose involvement in Young Ireland was no secret and whose qualifications to lead Irish Catholics were even more impressive than Anglin's. In that year, Thomas D'Arcy McGee arrived in Montreal to, however unknowingly, start a revolution in the thinking and character of Irish Catholics throughout British America, as well as in the political structures of the Provinces themselves.

CHAPTER THREE

A NEW NATIONALITY

The arrival of Thomas D'Arcy McGee in Montreal in 1857 marked the beginning of a decade that would see British North America move slowly toward a new political structure that would revolutionize the constitutional status of the British Provinces and their relations with the Empire and the United States. And in that revolution, the role of Irish Catholic journalists would be of major significance, not least for the impact they were to have on Irish Catholic reaction and acceptance of Confederation. Timothy Warren Anglin and Edward Whelan were just two of the journalists that would direct the Irish Catholic communities in the Provinces in their approach to the new ideas. Others, like James Moylan and Patrick Boyle of Toronto would arrive on the scene in the 1860's and have a vital part to play in the political events of the period. But one man would set the tone for the others. He would not only lead the way for Irish Catholics, but would share a vision of a new nationality for British Americans regardless of their ethnic or religious background. The Young Irelander, Thomas D'Arcy McGee was destined to span the decade, almost completely absorbed with the idea of new nationality and determined to lead his countrymen into a fresh and broadly-based national identity.

I. Thomas D'Arcy McGee

McGee had an eventful career even before he arrived in Montreal. As a boy of seventeen, he had been editor of the leading Irish Catholic newspaper in New England, the Boston Pilot. He had been the Parliamentary correspondent for the prestigious Freeman's Journal of Dublin, having been recommended by O'Connell himself who had been aware of McGee's work on the Pilot. But it was to Young Ireland that McGee committed himself in 1846, when he joined the staff of the Nation. From his earliest days in Strangford, County Down, he had been taught to love the ancient Irish culture of the Celts by his mother and first teachers. His time in the United States and England had not done anything to diminish that love and he soon became indispensable to the Nation and to Young Ireland's literary endeavours. He wrote one volume of the History of Ireland that Davis and Duffy had planned.[1] As Young Ireland became more involved in political affairs, McGee rose to the position of Secretary of the Irish Confederation, in which post he campaigned against the militancy of the republican wing under Mitchel. Ironically, he was one of the members of the Directory which decided on armed revolt in July 1848, regarding such action as inevitable given the provocation offered by the British authorities in suspending Habeas Corpus.[2] He was sent to Scotland to raise

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[1]Material on McGee's life is available in the main biographies: Slattery, T.P., The Assassination of D'Arcy McGee, (Toronto, 1968); Skelton, Isabel, Life of Thomas D'Arcy McGee, (Gardenvale, 1925); Phelan, Josephine, The Ardent Exile, (Toronto, 1951); and Burns, Robin, "Thomas D'Arcy McGee: A Biography", (Unpublished PhD thesis, McGill, 1976).

[2]Kee, Robert, The Green Flag, (London, 1972), p. 277.

men and money for the fight, but returned when word reached him of the fiasco overtaking the rising. For a few weeks he travelled through Mayo trying to raise the agrarian societies there, but the cause was hopeless and he finally took ship for the United States, leaving his young wife behind.

His first months in the United States were full of anger and loss. He had believed firmly in Davis' vision of a new nationality for Irishmen which had been destroyed in the rising. Even that had been a disaster. For this he blamed the Catholic Church in Ireland since it had condemned the rebellion and doomed it to failure by taking away the supporters among the Catholic peasantry upon whom success depended. Whether this had really made any significant difference to the outcome is doubtful, but McGee saw only the treachery of the Church and was not slow to express his feelings. He immediately established a new newspaper in New York which he defiantly named the Nation. In it he fulminated against England, the Church and everything to do with the British Empire:

> To rend the British flag - to blast the British name - to wreck the British edifice of power from Cornerstone to Cornice is our mission among the sons of men. 3

This was written only a few weeks after his arrival in the United States and indicates the state of his mind at the time. It was not in character with his opinions or actions in Young Ireland's moderate wing, where he had often condemned such sentiments in others. It was the outpourings of a young man of twenty-three who had experienced the Famine, the dash-

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[3] Nation, (New York), 11 Nov. 1848.

ing of the Young Ireland vision of a new nationality, as well as the separation from his wife and family. His wife had a child shortly after he fled Ireland, and they did not reach him in New York until August 1849. By then his former passions had begun to cool and he was seeing things from a clearer perspective again. By late 1848 he was again coming under the influence of Charles Gavan Duffy, his mentor for many years, who corrected him on many issues. Duffy had been in prison during the rising and, after his release, set about restoring the Nation in Dublin. Concerned by McGee's anti-clericalism, Duffy wrote to warn him:

> You do not act wisely in attacking the bishops and priests in that style....You are angry and therefore unreasonable. [4]

But by then the damage had been done. McGee's outspoken anti-clericalism had brought down on him the wrath of the Bishop of New York, who was not slow to use his influence to reduce McGee's readership. The Nation soon folded.

McGee remained in the United States for nine years, during which he gradually returned to his natural moderate outlook and a renewed and long-lasting commitment to the Catholic Church. He involved himself in the welfare of Irish Catholic immigrants in New York, Buffalo and Boston, setting up night-schools and even planning a mass-migration of Irish settlers to western States where they could form an Irish enclave away from the immorality, degradation and misery of the slums in which they lived in the cities of the eastern seaboard. His commitment to the

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[4]Duffy to McGee, Dublin, 18 Aug., 14 Oct. 1849. Quoted in Skelton, p. 167.

well-being of the Irish Catholics was marked and appreciated by the Catholic Church with whom he had a complete reconciliation. In an open letter to a fellow-Young Irelander arriving in America, McGee had laid out the development of his own thinking on the matter of the Church in the time following his flight from Ireland. After examining each of his beliefs, he said, he had discovered certain vital facts:

> 1. There is a Christendom.
> 2. That this Christendom exists by and for the Catholic Church....
> 5. That it is the highest duty of a Catholic man to go over cheerfully, heartily, and at once, to the side of Christendom - to the Catholic side, and to resist, with all his might, the conspirators who, under the stolen name of Liberty, make war upon all Christians. 5

His commitment to the Catholic Church lasted for the rest of his life, and it may well be that the process of alienation and return to faith may have been partly responsible for McGee's strong belief in religious toleration in his time in Canada.

His life in the United States was not a happy time for McGee. From the time of his arrival, he had failed to become acclimatized to the country. During his years there, he never applied for citizenship, nor made any move to fit into the political or social affairs of the cities in which he lived. Confining himself entirely to Irish Catholic affairs in the eastern cities, he refrained from comment on American politics except when they were of immediate relevance to his chosen constituency.

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[5]McGee to Thomas Francis Meagher, The American Celt, (New York), Aug. 1852, quoted in Skelton, p. 196.

His was a restless time in America, moving from New York to Boston to Buffalo and back to New York within ten years; starting two newspapers, both of which failed; lecturing to make enough to live on. Above all, what made his time in the United States so unpleasant were the almost constant attacks he suffered from his former radical colleagues of Young Ireland. From as early as 1849, McGee came under attack from Irish republicans of the John Mitchel camp. Just as McGee, in the bitterness of exile, had denounced the Church's actions in 1848, the Irish republicans blamed defeat on moderates like McGee and Duffy, who they felt had not been responsible in their approach to, and prosecution of, the rising. McGee himself had quickly got over his burst of extreme rhetoric. Under the influence of his wife and Duffy, he soon regained his natural sense of perspective. Unfortunately, he had damaged his reputation with the moderate Irish Catholic Americans, and found himself attacked by them for being anti-clerical. They were not quick to forgive and McGee was held in suspicion by them until his departure for Canada. Attacked on one side for being too moderate, and on the other for being radical, McGee struggled to continue publishing his newspapers and books. Then, in 1850, McGee met a man who was to have a profound effect on his future. James George Moylan of Guelph, Upper Canada, invited McGee to Canada to lecture in the major cities of his Province. Moylan was an Irishman who had once worked in the Chilean legation in Washington and was now a schoolteacher in Guelph, a respected member of the Irish Catholic community in Canada.

McGee toured the United Provinces of Canada in 1850 and was very

impressed by what he found. The Know-Nothing Party was then influential in the United States, stirring up hatred and sectarian discrimination against Catholics, and McGee found the absence of any such political movement in Canada a welcome and refreshing change from New York and Boston. His continued association with Moylan and Canada in the 1850's furthered the split with the radical Irish in the United States. When he visited Ireland in 1855, McGee actually recommended Canada as a destination for Irish Catholic emigrants, which angered and baffled his friends and enemies in the United States. But McGee had no trouble in advocating a British Province to Irish Catholic consideration.[6] He had seen how much freedom the Irish Catholics of Canada had, not just politically, but religiously and socially too. As his fortunes in America worsened, it came as a welcome departure when he was invited by prominent Irish Canadian Catholics to move to Montreal to start a newspaper there for the benefit of Irish Catholics. Understood in the invitation was the promise of political election for McGee in the near future. Foremost among the names of the delegation inviting McGee to Canada was that of James G. Moylan of Guelph.[7]

McGee made it clear in the first issue of his new Montreal paper that it was not to be seen simply as a Catholic journal.[8] There was already published in Montreal the most influential Catholic journal in

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[6]Burns, p. 282.

[7]New Era, (Montreal), 25 May 1857.

[8]Ibid.

Canada, the True Witness, with which McGee had no desire to come in conflict. Rather, he wanted his journal to address itself to the Irish Catholic's position in Canada in political and social terms, not merely religious. After his time in the United States, it seemed to McGee that the move to Montreal was the start of a new chapter in his life; and this, coupled with his belief that in Canada he could carry on the work begun in the days of the Dublin Nation, led him to expect great things of this new era in his affairs. Once again the influence of Duffy can be seen in McGee's attitudes. Duffy had left Ireland for Australia in 1856 and within a year he had been elected to the Assembly in Victoria and had chaired a committe which advocated the Confederation of the Australian Provinces. Duffy's committee called for a conference of the Provinces to discuss the proposal, and although that first initiative failed, Duffy continued to press for Confederation as the most desirable goal.[9] These proposals, and Duffy's prominent role in them, was given a central place in the pages of McGee's new journal, which he named the New Era, first published in May, 1857. As McGee said in his first issue:

> It is to be called The New Era as an indication of the time of its birth. [10]

In the prospectus for his first newspaper in the United States, named after the Young Ireland Nation, McGee had called for a new nationality for the Irish in America in words that were almost identical to those of Thomas Davis:

> ...a Nationality of the spirit as well as of the letter

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[9] McMinn, W.G., A Constitutional History of Australia, (Melbourne, 1979), p. 95.

[10] New Era, 25 May 1857.

> ... - a Nationality which may embrace Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter. 11

In the New Era, in his very first months in British North America, he laid down the framework for a new nationality for that collection of Provinces in a similar style and with, perhaps, more vision even than anything he had done in the United States. His very first editorial gave a catch-phrase to Canadian politics that would bind together many varied ideas and ambitions in the following decade: A New Nationality.

This was not simply a vague, poetic dream couched in words that had no practical relevance to real life. McGee, in the pages of the New Era, set down the essential requirements clearly and boldly:

> Every important topic that can arise ought to be viewed by the light and decided by the requirements of Canadian nationality. 12

> You must become a nation de facto. 13

Primarily, a new nationality required some political expression, and this McGee saw in terms of either a federation of the British American Provinces, or else British American representation in the Imperial Parliament. This latter idea did not appeal to him as much as the former, and it received little consideration in his articles. The main reason for the extension of the sphere of political life in British North America was the low standard of political representation, concerned with merely regional or sectional interests to the detriment of the Provinces:

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[11] Public Archives of Canada, John O'Gorman Papers, "McGee the Irish Patriot", p. 15, quoted in Burns, Robin, "D'Arcy McGee and the New Nationality", (unpublished M.A. thesis, Carleton, 1966), p. 127.

[12] New Era, 19 Jan. 1858.

[13] Ibid., 10 June, 1857.

> When you have set before your soul that object [becoming a nation], its high influence will lift your counsellors out of the slough of mere pecuniary politics....Politicians will become nobler-minded, and the country will be every way better served.

He rejected charges that his ideas might be impractical and visionary:

> We by no means argue that the practical pressing questions of the day ought not to have their due share of attention. But there are questions of tomorrow as well as of today; of right and wrong, as well as of mere expediency. And one of these is the extension of the political sphere of these Provinces, either by confederation or Imperial representation.[14]

This emphasis on all the Provinces, rather than just the Canadas, was a feature of McGee's writings from the very beginning of his time in Montreal. In August 1857, he wrote an editorial on the economic aspects of confederation, laying great stress on the importance of establishing trade links with the Maritimes Provinces.[15] In an editorial published for the 1857 elections, he posed "A Few Questions for Canadian Constituencies", in which he asked:

> Whether Canada's true interests does not point in the first place, to a reciprocity of dealing with the Maritime British Provinces, in preference to New York, Boston and Portland? [16]

Essential to such a change was the extension of the new railways to join the various Provinces. The Grand Trunk Railway, which was already losing money, ought to be encouraged and subsidized in order to facilitate

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[14] Ibid., 10 June 1857.

[15] Ibid., 4 Aug. 1857.

[16] Ibid., 27 June 1857.

expansion to Halifax and St. John. [17]

Besides encouraging greater contact between Canada and the Maritime Provinces, McGee also looked West for the new nationality, writing about the Hudson's Bay Company lands in Red River and the North-West. Aware of American expansionist ambitions, McGee wondered:

> Whether the increase of American population along the lake shores, and on the Minnesota frontier, do not demand the timely occupation of our north-western frontier? [18]

This led him to call for a great increase in immigration to Canada in order to populate the new lands of the west, a call echoed throughout the life of the New Era. [19] McGee was not insensitive to the native claims in the western lands, however, and he called for safeguards for the Indian bands in Hudson's Bay lands, the details of which were to be worked out by negotiation. [20] But when it came to creating a new nationality, then political expansion was not enough. Such growth would merely be the frame in which the new nationality would grow. Political unity was not enough to ensure a common identity and culture which a new nationality would require. It was more "of the spirit" than of mere politics. Alongside his concern for minorities like the Indians or the French-Canadians went a desire to see something newngrow up to replace the different ethnic groups:

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[17] Ibid., 6 Oct. 1857.

[18] Ibid., 27 June 1857.

[19] Ibid., 27 May, 12 June 1857; 20 Ap. 1858.

[20] Ibid., 1 Aug. 1857.

> For my own part, I respect every nationality represented on our soil; but yet I hold that we should consider them as invaluable materials to a desired end, than as finalities themselves. 21

It is here that the influence of Young Ireland is clearly seen. Just as the Gaels, Normans, Old English and Anglo-Saxons in Ireland needed to find a new nationality together, so the French, English, Irish and Indians of British North America had to develop something uniquely their own in terms of nationality. And that meant more than political structures, it also had to do with a common sense of pride and achievement. This was why McGee objected to the Canadian Government referring the question of a permanent capital for the Province to the Queen in London. He believed that the experience of deciding such a matter for themselves would give Canadians a greater pride in themselves and their capital.[22] He sought an independent Canadian foreign policy, to increase Canadian self-respect and identity in the world.[23] This was not, however, an attempt to cut the links with the Empire. Rather, McGee sought to strengthen these links by strengthening the Provinces. He wanted to see a royal Prince of the blood sent to rule the federated Provinces, making them an integral, though autonomous, part of the Empire.[24] This was very much what Davis and the moderates of Young Ireland had wanted in the 1840's, a return to legislative independence, but with greater scope for

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[21] Canadian Freeman, (Toronto), 12 June, 1859.

[22] New Era, 15 June, 1857.

[23] Ibid., 1 June 1857.

[24] Ibid., 19 Jan. 1858.

national initiative and enterprise, within the British Empire.

The remarkable thing about McGee's editorials in the New Era is that they foreshadowed with amazing accuracy the major arguments concerning Confederation that would be used in the coming decade.[25] His own vision of a new nationality changed very little during these years, though it may seem that he accepted less in 1867 than he called for in 1857. However, the truth is that, although the precise details of the Confederation scheme differed somewhat from the vision of the New Era, Confederation itself was only a part of McGee's concept of a new nationality for British North America. Along with his political activities in creating a franework, he also laid down guidelines for the cultural and social aspects essential to such a creation. In the Young Ireland tradition, literature was the lifeblood of his new nationality:

> Literature is the vital atmosphere of nationality....
> No literature, no national life - this is an irreversible law....Come! let us construct a national literature for Canada, neither British nor French, nor Yankeeish, but the offspring of the soil, borrowing lessons from all, but asserting its own title throughout all. 26

In December 1858, McGee published a collection of poems, aptly titled Canadian Ballads and Occasional Verses, in which he wrote about Champlain, Cartier and other heroes of the new world. He was giving an example to young British American writers of the kind of material available to them

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[25] Material on the New Era editorials on new nationality is available in Burns, Robin, "D'Arcy McGee and the New Nationality", (unpublished M.A. thesis, Carleton, 1966), which deals exclusively with the New Era period.

[26] New Era, 10 June 1857.

in the creation of a new literature. But it was not as a poet, nor yet an historian, that McGee was to do most in reaching his goal. Politics was to be the forum, and eloquence and vision were to be his main weapons.

II. Years of Upheaval

In the affairs of Thomas D'Arcy McGee, British North America and the new nationality, 1858 was the watershed year. In February of that year, McGee took his place in the Canadian Assembly for the first time, having been elected as an Independent for Montreal West in the general election of the previous fall. He witnessed the first official proposal for the federation of the British North American Provinces being made in the Assembly by another Independent member, Alexander Tilloch Galt in July. Galt's proposals were very much in keeping with McGee's own ideas, although Galt's motives were economic rather than nationalistic. He feared for the economic future of Canada without union and a strong Grand Trunk Railway to link the Provinces into a unified economic trading block. By the end of 1858, Galt was a member of the Canadian Government and a delegation had been dispatched to London to discuss the question of British North American Union with the Imperial Government. The Maritimes were the scene of much discussion of the issue of a Union of the Lower

Provinces, encouraged and maintained by the Lieutenant-Governors of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The governments of Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland had agreed to appoint delegates to a conference on the issue should that be the will of the Imperial Government.[27] There was growing support in Canada for a settlement with the Hudson's Bay Company on handing over their fiefdom in the North-West. On the face of things, then, it seemed in 1858 that some move towards political restructuring in British North America was imminent.

However, in 1858 the British North Americans had practically no common identity, except insofar as the Empire gave them a common allegiance. The people of the Maritimes considered the Canadians to be foreigners. The Maritimers themselves were a variegated assortment, with Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland looking more to London than to Halifax or Fredricton. New Brunswick and Nova Scotia were basically self-contained Provinces, secure in their status as Imperial colonies. From their perspective, Canadians were either French, Yankees or radical Grits like George Brown. It was this kind of hostility that Canadians would have to overcome if they were to create any continental nation. But the economic motivation of Galt's proposals would have little appeal for the Lower Provinces if it was thought that the chief beneficiary would be Canada. Canada's well-being was none of their concern.

Galt's proposals were never voted on, as political events in the summer of 1858 overshadowed such imaginative enterprises. In August, the

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[27]Morton, W.L., The Critical Years: The Union of British North America, 1857-1873, (Toronto, 1968), p. 64.

the Government of John A. Macdonald and George Etiènne Cartier finally fell after struggling through months of uncertain rule. The new Brown-Dorion Government was brought down by dubious actions by Macdonald after only two days. Still using doubtful constitutional procedure, the old government became the new government within a matter of days, much to their own delight and to the outrage of their opponents. McGee came out firmly in support of Brown and his defeated administration. Aside from earning praise from such an unlikely source as the Globe, as well as some insulting references to his rebellious past from Macdonald in the House, McGee came in for some very serious criticism from an important and powerful force, George Clerk of the True Witness.

Clerk, the converted Scot who had carried on a fierce sectarian campaign against Brown and the Grits, was furious with McGee for daring to support the enemy. Clerk had always been dubious of McGee and the New Era, and had little time for McGee's new nationality ideas. What he had wanted was an Irishman to stand for the Assembly to fight for Catholic interests in the traditional sectarian manner of Canadian politics. Having that man actually support George Brown was like having Brown support the Pope: an aberration andhheresy of major proportions. Clerk began a campaign to force McGee out of public life. In this he had the support of many of the members of the Catholic hierarchy in Lower Canada, to whom the name of George Brown and his Clear Grit Party was synonomous with evil and the worst excesses of evangelicalism. McGee was already fighting for his political life. In November 1857 he had written:

> First in my order of obligations I rank the duty of promoting unity among Irishmen themselves - unity for

noble public purposes and no other. 28

Now that Clerk was attempting to undermine his support among Irish Catholics, it was more than ever necessary that McGee grasp the leadership of that community away from sectarian interests and to use it to further his own concept of a new nationality that would be free of Brown-versus-Clerk bigotry. Before McGee could preach to others on a new nationality, it seemed that he would first have to convert his own Irish Catholic community to the idea. He no longer had the New Era to use as his public mouthpiece. It had ceased publication in May 1858, since McGee was too busy as a parliamentarian to see to the duties of a newspaper editor. But he was too aware of the power of the press to give up journalism completely; and in June 1858 he helped found a new newspaper for Irish Catholics, this time based in Toronto. It was called the Canadian Freeman, symbolically named after Francis Collins' journal of the 1830's. McGee was always careful to remind Canadians that Irish Catholics were loyal and trustworthy:

> We believe the Irish in Canada to be sincerely attached to the present form of government, and to be daily growing in constitutional knowledge....At home, an Irishman's sympathies were often against the law, because law and justice were long and widely divorced in Ireland. 29

Drawing on Francis Collins' memory was another attempt to identify Irish Catholics of the 1860's with the loyal reputation of Collins and the Irish of the 1830's. The new Canadian Freeman was to educate Irish Cath-

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[28] New Era, 7 Nov. 1857.

[29] Ibid., 25 May 1857.

olics to that same sense of loyalty and allegiance. To edit it, McGee personally chose his friend James G. Moylan, who had been so important in his success in his adopted land, and who represented an influential section of the Catholic community in Upper Canada.[30]

Clerk published clear condemnations of McGee's actions in allying himself with Brown and the Reform group in the Assembly. Whatever the reason, an alliance with the forces of evangelicalism was unacceptable to the reactionary Catholicism of the True Witness. With the zeal of the convert, Clerk sought to bring down McGee.

As McGee's ally in the fight against Clerk and his supporters in the ranks of the Catholic hierarchy, James Moylan was in an uncomfortable position. Far more than McGee. Moylan was very much a Catholic journalist, believing that his Catholicism was central to his role as a journalist and public man. It was always Moylan's contention that the struggle for religious liberty for Catholics was, at root, a spiritual battle; and that, when he was writing editorials against the machinations of those who sought to deprive Catholics of their rights and freedoms, he was fighting Satan.[31] His political convictions were coloured by this view of the importance of his religion and made compromise difficult, if not impossible. In the election campaign of 1863, he laid down guidelines for Catholics to follow:

> As Catholics, we are bound by every obligation to consult for the free and full exercise of our holy religion,

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[30]Slattery, p. 117-8.

[31]Canadian Freeman, 26 Feb. 1863.

> untrammeled by any odious or irritating restrictions. As Canadians, we must pay due regard to whatever concerns the well-being of our native or adopted country. 32

Moylan's priorities were clear. Catholicism was the prism through which all issues were viewed. He held that patriotism itself had to stem from one's religion, and that "the State should be in harmony with the Church, whether they be organically connected or not".[33] That was the ideal, of course, and Moylan had to recognise reality. As a Catholic, he might believe that states should follow the Church. As a Canadian, he accepted the rights of others to differ. In the area of Church supremacy in Canada he agreed that Catholics had too"limit it to the matter of education".[34] The question of separate schools for Catholics was one on which Moylan stood firm. He believed that Catholics in the Upper Province should have the same guarantees in education that Protestants had in Lower Canada:

> Put this our national right on a clear footing, and Canadian Catholics and Protestants can go hand in hand in all other matters. 35

Moylan's bete noir on this, and most, issues was George Brown of the Toronto Globe. Brown's anti-Catholic editorials of the 1850's had marked him as the leading bigot in Canada in the eyes of the Catholic community. Although his tone softened under McGee's influence after the events of

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[32] Ibid., 27 May 1863.

[33] Ibid., 15 May 1862.

[34] Ibid.,

[35] Ibid., 23 Jan. 1862.

August 1858, Moylan never trusted Brown's conversion to toleration and never understood his Scots Presbyterian mentality. For Moylan, the "Scotch Clear Grits" were a group of bigoted democrats who were out to destroy the very fabric of civilization. But his own beliefs must have given Brown pause in his turn:

> When they [Brown and the Grits] blame us for uniting religion with politics, and for appealing to religious prejudices in our warfare against the insidious and wicked devices of false guides and evil counsellors,... we are only a private soldier passing along the ranks the watchwords given by the Commander-in-Chief at Rome. 36

Moylan was writing as a loyal Catholic, but it only convinced Presbyterians of the popish disloyalty of the Catholics of Canada, and of the improper influence of a foreign potentate on the political affairs of Canada. This view of politics as an integral part of the Catholic's battle with evil was one of the things which perpetuated the sectarian divisions that McGee sought to dissipate in the new nationality.

It may seem then that Moylan was an unlikely ally for McGee in his fight for survival, especially when McGee's crime was consorting with Brown and the "enemy" were the Catholic Bishops of Lower Canada. In fact, Moylan was showing great courage and faith in McGee's ideas, and was a vital factor in McGee's survival. The campaign to force McGee out of public life culminated in a Declaration by Bishop Bourget of Montreal, which was read in all churches in that city on August 14, 1859. In it, the Bishop publicly supported Clerk and the True Witness by name against those politicians "who through imprudence or malice foment prejudices of race".[37] It was an obvious reference to McGee's support for Brown and

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[36] Ibid., 26 Feb. 1863. [37] True Witness, [Montreal], 19 Aug. 1859.

representation by population. When Clerk editorialised on the pronouncement a week later, he claimed to have the support of almost every bishop in Lower Canada. It seemed to be the end for McGee; instead it boomeranged on Clerk. On September 30, Moylan hosted a banquet in McGee's honour in Toronto, at which a letter from Bishop de Charbonnel of that city was read. The Bishop warmly praised McGee as "a true, practical friend of the principles and institutions of the Church". In addition, as though to soothe any fears Moylan and his supporters may have had regarding his stand on representation by population, McGee made a speech in which he called clearly for an entirely new constitutional arrangement in which representation by population would be accompanied by guarantees for minority groups.[38] Even the Protestant press, who had heretofore been busy condemning McGee , now came out in his support against what they saw as the blatant clerical interference in politics being practised by Clerk's friends in the hierarchy. It was a precedent for these journals to publicly endorse an Irish Catholic politician of McGee's background; and out of the entire campaign he emerged stronger than ever before and with a broader-based level of support and recognition as the spokesman for Irish Catholics in Canada.

McGee had proved that Catholics could deal with Brown and the Grits and had gained the respect of the Protestant journals of Upper Canada. It was a major victory for the forces of moderation and a defeat for sectarian and sectional ideas. James Moylan had been invaluable to McGee

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[38] Globe, (Toronto), 29 Sep. 1859.

during the year. He had decided to give the McGee-Brown alliance a try, but he was not sanguine about the likely results. Moylan did not believe in representation by population. He saw it as a dangerous move toward democracy and the dissolution of the Union. This, too, was a product of his Catholic philosophy. Moylan thought democracy to be "inimical to the Church",[39] and that "in the very nature of things, Conservatism and Catholicity are fitting allies".[40] Not only was George Brown openly antagonistic to the Catholic Church, he was suspected by Moylan of being a democratic republican, an ideology at variance with the best interests of Irish Catholics in Canada. Representation by population was also a threat to the Union:

> Representation by Population, as understood by the Radical press of Upper Canada, and Dissolution of the Union are synonomous terms. 41

The reason Moylan supported McGee in his alliance with Brown was simply that Moylan believed in McGee and in his concept of a new nationality. Moylan believed in the idea of a Federation of the British North American Provinces from the beginning of the Canadian Freeman, though he was vague about what exactly such a federation would involve. He often echoed McGee's call to Canadians to form a new nation in North America:

> The rising generation of Canada should not forget that their true interest lies in cultivating, by all legitimate means, the closest intimacy with the sister provinces, in considering themselves as one with them, and in showing by

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[39] Canadian Freeman, 13 Feb. 1862.

[40] Ibid., 15 May, 1862.

[41] Ibid., 7 Apr. 1862.

> their acts that they believe themselves the destined founders of a great empire, and not what they have hitherto been - a race of cosmopolites, without flag or country. 42

The evolution of that "great empire" would take time and a growing sense of common purpose and direction on the part of all the Provinces:

> Nations, like individuals, must see one another before becoming acquainted....Yet what means have been taken to facilitate the necessary intercourse between the people? 43

It was clear to Moylan that McGee, at least, was doing his part to bring about the better communications between the Provinces. As early as September 1859, McGee had visited the Maritimes, speaking at Halifax on the need for reconciliation between the people of the Provinces in the areaeof religion and sectionalism. He had called for unity among the Provinces, and the Globe noted the enthusiastic reception for his speech from Samuel Tilley and Joseph Howe, the Premiers of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.[44] In October of that year, the Opposition members of the Canadian House of Assembly passed resolutions, drafted by McGee, in favour of a general scheme of federation for the British North American Provinces.[45]

D'Arcy McGee had succeeded in drawing the Irish Catholics of

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[42] Ibid., 30 Oct. 1862.

[43] Ibid.,

[44] Globe, 7 Sep. 1859.

[45] Skelton, p. 373.

Canada a working alliance with their natural enemy, and in opening communications with the people of the Maritime Provinces within two years of entering the political arena in British America. He was now determined to make these advances work in favour of his scheme for a new nationality. In May 1860, George Brown rose to move either federation or else dissolution of the Canadian Union. It was the act of an impatient man, and McGee regretted the stark choice Brown forced on the House. He spoke on the motion on May 3, and he gave perhaps the clearest picture of what he dreamed of for the new nationality:

> I call it a Northern nation - for such it must become if all of us but do our duty to the last....I look to the future of my adopted country with hope, though not without anxiety; I see in the not remote distance, one great nationality bound like the shield of Achilles, by the blue of ocean - I see it quartered into many communities - each disposing of its internal affairs but all bound together by free institutions, free intercourse, and free commerce; I see within the round of that shield, the peaks of the Western mountains, and the crests of the Eastern waves...I see a generation of industrious, contented moral men, free in name and in fact - men capable of maintaining, in peace and in war, a constitution worthy of such a country. 46

It was a powerful speech. He saw that a vision was necessary otherwise the mundane day-to-day problems and factionalisms of politics would make the dream of a new nationality but the empty ramblings of a prophet in the wilderness. McGee's aim was to set before the people of British North America a goal to aim at, a revelation of what could be.

> We had advanced a certain way on the road to nationality, and all the power of the Legislature could not stop it, though it might retard it. He looked forward to the day

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[46] McGee, T.D., Speeches and Addresses chiefly on the Subject of British American Union, (London, 1865), p. 175-6.

> when we should be known not as Upper or Lower Canadians, Nova Scotians, or New Brunswickans, but as members of a nation designated as the Six United Provinces. 47

Although his eloquence was impressive, he was still very much alone in his mission to create a new nationality. Brown and the Grits saw federation as an escape from the domination of Lower Canada, and as a first step to the acquisition of the West for Upper Canada. As Moylan had said, either federation or dissolution of the Union were equally acceptable for Brown. The Galt proposal was primarily designed to ensure the economic well-being of Canada through the development of the Grand Trunk Railway. A new nationality was not in Galt's political guidebook.

D'Arcy McGee carried on his fight for federation almost alone among Canadian politicians, supported by an uneasy Moylan. But circumstances brought about a change in attitudes necessary to bring people to accept his recipe for a restructuring of British North America. During the 1850's the great fear in British America was that the Americans might try to deflect their own mounting domestic tensions by turning against them instead. And when, on April 12, 1861, the American Civil War finally broke out, the sympathies of British Americans, initially on the side of the North in their fight against slavery, shifted to the South as it became clear that it would be a long and costly affair for both sides. It was hoped that a Southern victory would leave both sides too weak to try any hostile moves against the British Provinces, ensuring a divided and permanently inoffensive neighbour. From the beginning of the war, McGee

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47 Legislative Assembly of Canada Debates, Library Association of Canada Microfilm, 3 May, 1860.

had been warning that Canadians needed to look to their means of defense: a new, militant and powerful entity had emerged south of the border:

> That shot fired at Fort Sumter was the signal gun of a new epoch for North America, which told the people of Canada, more plainly than human speech can ever express it, to sleep no more, except on their arms - unless in their sleep they desire to be overtaken and subjugated. 48

With his experience of the nationalistic fervour of the United States, he was convinced that an American invasion was quite as likely during the War as before it. American politicians and journalists only added to British American fears by their aggressive and threatening speeches and editorials. A prime example was Secretary of States Seward, who congratulated the British American Provinces on their great progress over the years, since that would make them better States of the Union when Annexation became fact.[49] The deep-seated fear of being caught up in a war between Britain and the United States made the Provinces even more aware of their vulnerability. In November 1861, those fears seemed justified when a Northern ship stopped a British passenger vessel, the Trent, and abducted two Confederate emissaries who were travelling to England. The British authorities demanded their return and war fever on both sides of the line reached a critical level. McGee took the opportunity to call a meeting of Irish Catholics in Montreal to raise an Irish regiment for the defense of Canada.[50] The regiment was not required in the event, as the two emissaries were released after a few weeks and the threat of war

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[48] McGee, T.D., Two Speeches on British North American Union, (London, 1865), p. 34. Speech given at Quebec, 10 May 1862.

[49] Slattery, p. 154.

[50] Montreal Gazette, 26 Dec. 1861.

subsided. But the experience was a traumatic one for British North America for two reasons. First, they realised their vulnerability to American invasion. Second, there arose a fear that Britain might not come to the aid of her American Provinces if it meant risking war with the United States. The prevailing opinion in Britain was that the colonies should look to their own defense and not be totally dependent on the Mother Country to bear the burden of financing troops and fortifications abroad.

The Times of London was outspoken in its statements on the responsibility of the Canadians to look to their own defense, and it was accurately expressing the ideas of Her Majesty's Government when it said:

> Let not the Canadians...believe that they have in their present connexion with Great Britain a sufficient protection against invasion without taking any trouble to defend themselves. Such an opinion is founded on a mistake both of our power and our will....If we had the power, it is quite certain that should not have the will ....If they are to be defended at all, they must make up their minds to bear the greater part of the burden of their own defense....To us the exposure of Canada to foreign invasion is a secondary matter; to Canada herself it is life and death. Let her arm by all means, but let her arm, not for our sake, but for her own. 51

Between the fear of invasion fom the South, and such stern warnings from Britain, the people of British North America were brought face to face with what was for many aenew and unpleasant realization: the burden of responsibility for their own affairs was being forced on them and it demanded a rethinking of the political and military future of the Provinces. Although the Trent affair of 1861 passed peacefully, it had done much to educate Canadians in the political facts of life. Indeed, a new era had arrived in North American affairs.

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[51] Times, (London), 6 June 1862.

III. A split in the ranks

In the early years of the American Civil War it seemed that the suspicions of James Moylan regarding George Brown were justified. The sectarian diatribes of the Globe were becoming ever more offensive to Moylan and his co-religionists, and Brown's relations with McGee were deteriorating. In the summer of 1860, during a visit to Canada by the Prince of Wales, there had been attempts made by the Orange Order to gain tacit recognition by the Prince in a number of cities in Upper Canada. Although these had been foiled by the Prince's Secretary, the Duke of Newcastle, they had been bitterly resented by the Catholics of the Province. Moylan hardened in his attitude to Brown and Protestant extremists like him, and in the early days of the general election of 1861 he announced in the Canadian Freeman that he could no longer support the Reformers. McGee was taken by surprise by Moylan's decision and angrily turned on his protegé. For a number of weeks the two men traded insults in the press, doing their common cause of new nationality no good by their bitter mutual denunciations. It did neither man any credit, though perhaps Moylan showed more discernment than McGee in the matter. McGee himself was forced to cut his ties with Brown within a year because of the same sectarian provocations in the Globe. But he suffered from Moylan's defection, losing his Toronto mouthpiece at the start of an election campaign. Moylan's name-calling helped neither the campaign nor the new nationality either. He accused McGee of being a "West Briton" and a "parvenu", titles which owed their force to sectarian and Irish political backgrounds.[52]

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[52] Canadian Freeman, 20 Mr. 1862.

The quarrel between McGee and Moylan passed by the end of the year, but the former intimacy and support never returned, and from 1861 on, Moylan was very much his own man with a distinct idea of new nationality and the future of Canada which did not necessarily agree with McGee's. Moylan's vision of Canada's future was, as ever, seen through the prism of Catholicism and Irish identity. Although he would defend Canada's reputation against the slights of the American press, it was done as an Irishman, rather than a Canadian. In response to a campaign by the Irish-American newspaper, the Boston Pilot, to gather subscriptions from the Irish in Canada, Moylan declared:

> If the Boston Pilot would learn to treat Canada and Canadians with the same love and consideration as it treats the bank bills of the Province, there would be no cause for complaint....Canada - where Irishmen enjoy more of real liberty and freedom of conscience than they do in any other part of this continent. 53

The future nation that Moylan looked to was perhaps more independent than McGee had in mind:

> When the day comes, and come it must, for the Confederate Provinces, of which we will be one, to declare their supremacy, under an independent government; then we should be not only wielding, but prepared to maintain our right by force of arms. 54

By early 1862 the danger from the Uhited States had become the centre of attention for British North Americans. Moylan, like McGee, saw the English unwillingness to defend Canada as an opportunity for promoting

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[53] Ibid., 7 May 1863.

[54] Ibid., 5 Feb. 1863.

the new nationality. Moylan wrote advising Irish Canadians to look to Confederation as their only alternative should the Empire decide to break the link with her American colonies.[55] McGee wanted the Empire to stand by her committments as long as they continued to oversee the Provinces:

> Those who talk...of it being unreasonable to expect the Empire to defend Canada forget that Canada is itself the Empire, in North America. 56

As the Civil War dragged on, the danger of invasion or annexation remained to underscore the uncertain fate of the Provinces should Britain actually withdraw from her Empire in North America. This clearly helped McGee's cause. He was offering a clear and viable solution, both for the Provinces and for Britain an arrangement by which the Empire and the colonies could remain linked in a mutually agreeable fashion. Unlike Moylan's rather vague ideas, McGee never wanted an independent Canada totally separated from the Empire. He summed up his thoughts on the issue in an election speech in Montreal in 1863:

> I intend to adhere to the national policy I have always advocated and acted upon...the policy of reconciliation between our different classes and creeds - the policy of internal reform, and parri passu with that reform, a great series of internal improvements stretching from the frontier of New Brunswick to British Columbia. This policy is the only true basis of Colonial defense - for it is a policy of...a new northern nationality, subordinate to, helpful to, and helped by the empire to which we belong. 57

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[55] Ibid., 30 Oct. 1862.

[56] Ibid., 3 Apr. 1862.

[57] Ibid., 11 June 1863.

The duty of British Americans, according to McGee, was to take action for their own defense and make the Provinces something which the Empire would want to stand by:

> We must defend Canada to the best of our power, or we must Americanise. 58

> If there were a Crown Colony at Red River, and a Crown Prince presiding over our united destinies in British America, would she [England] not have something to stand by? 59

It was, in many respects, another adaptation of the philosophy McGee had tried to spread among the Irish immigrants in the United States in the 1850's; an encouragement to improve and grow in unity based on native talents and initiative. The basis of a new nationality as McGee saw it had changed little from the days of the New Era, and by 1863 it was clear in his mind in all its challenge and grandeur. He found that there were three main converging arguments in favour of federation:

> Upper Canada says to Lower Canada unmistakeably, 'the present state of things between you and us cannot continue much longer'; Great Britain says to her North American colonies, 'the present stateof things between you and us cannot continue'; the American Government by the voice of all its cannon proclaims that the former state of things on this continent is closed, and a veritable new era opened. 60

The issue of defense had linked together the last two factors cited by McGee. The truth of the first was daily demonstrated in the Canadian House of Assembly, where it was becoming ever more difficult for any political group to gather and maintain enough support to govern adequately; this at a time when the nature of events demanded a strong and stable

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[58] Ibid., 24 Sep. 1863.

[59] Montreal Gazette, 11 Aug. 1863.

[60] Ibid., 3 July 1863.

administration for Canada. By the middle of 1860 George Brown had despaired of anything other than a complete dissolution of the existing Union as an answer to the deadlock rapidly overtaking the political process in Canada. Other Grits had spoken out in favour of annexation to the United States, further alienating McGee from the Reform group in the Assembly, with whom he had allied himself since late 1858.

In 1862 McGee had become a cabinet minister in the government of Sandfield Macdonald. It was a frustrating experience of ministerial life, as the weakness of the Government forbade any imaginative enterprises. What made McGee's tenure worse was a dispute which began with Sandfield Macdonald on the matter of immigrants. Immigration was part and parcel of McGee's new nationality. He wanted immigrants to populate the West and increase the size of the new nation's labour force and citizenry. When, however, Macdonald made slighting references to immigrants being "white-washed" at the docks, it angered McGee and enlarged the growing rift between him and the Reformers. When Macdonald dropped him from Government in May 1863, McGee entered into open dispute with the Reformers, and Macdonald in particular, on their attitude to immigrants. Moylan rejoined McGee, happy to see his natural partner free of the snare of the Grits. Moylan claimed that McGee had been dismissed from the Government for personal reasons and at the insistence of Brown, who wanted no Irish Catholics in the Reform Government.[61] Brown's Globe attacked McGee, accusing him of being illiberal and ambitious. McGee, hurt by Brown's ingratitude, replied:

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[61]Canadian Freeman, 27 Aug. 1863.

> Was I illiberal in 1858, when I demanded fair-play for Mr. Brown in Toronto and elsewhere, at the peril of losing many of my best friends? 62

He pointed out that Brown only wanted to expand to the west because he coveted the land for Upper Canada, yet derided a general Federation as a means of self-defense for Canada:

> The Globe people advocate western extension, because it is western, and oppose eastern extension because it is eastern; while I advocate both, because I desire to see the speedy union of all British America, as one great self-protecting power. 63

It was, therefore, with a full awareness of the dangers of Canadian sectionalism, the American menace, and British indifference to the fate of British America, that McGee set off on another tour of the Maritimes in the summer of 1863.

McGee was probably the only major Canadian politician to have had first-hand experience of the Lower Provinces before 1864. There was almost a complete lack of political interest in the affairs of the Maritimes on the part of the Canadian governments. McGee's visits to the area had begun as early as 1859, putting into practice what he had been preaching about the necessity of getting to know others before uniting with them. He had already established relations with the leading politicians of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and had much in common with the leading Irish Catholics journalist of Prince Edward Island, Edward Whelan. On his 1863 tour, then, McGee was renewing his acquaintance with provinces already familiar and for which he had the warmest regard. He spoke in Halifax, his first stop,

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[62] Ibid., 17 Sep. 1863.

[63] Ibid., 10 Sep. 1863.

in July. As usual, he put forward the practical, as well as the visionary, arguments in favour of Federation, demonstrating the benefits in free trade that Federation would bring to the Maritimes. But his main thrust was what he called "the patriotic argument":

> The argument to be drawn from the absolute necessity of cultivating an enthusiastic patriotism amongst us.

And dealing with a topic which was to become common in the Federation issue, McGee wondered:

> Why are our great men sometimes found so small? Because we are sectional and provincial in spirit, as well as in fact.64

These were the old and tried lines of reasoning that he had been using since the days of the New Era. But in St. John, New Brunswick, they received a cold reception from Timothy Warren Anglin.

By 1863 Anglin was a respected member of St. John society, totally assimilated into the life of his adopted Province. For Anglin, New Brunswick was his country, his nation. Within the Imperial framework, and benefitting greatly from the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854, New Brunswick and its Irish Catholic leader were complacent in their provincial isolation. This complacency was most clearly seen in Anglin's attitude to the idea of Federation of the British North American Provinces. Although he had commented briefly on the idea ever since it was first raised by Galt in 1858, Anglin had always dismissed it as an impractical and pointless exercise.[65] His opposition to Confederation was based on three

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[64] Montreal Gazette, 31 July, 1863; Morning Chronicle, (Halifax), 23 July, 1863.

[65] Morning Freeman, (St. John), 9 Oct. 1858.

main points: the idea was impractical at that time and for some time to come; it meant breaking the link with the Empire; and there was no need for any "new nationality", the identification of New Brunswick with the Empire was more than Confederation could offer in the realm of nationality.

Before the American Civil War broke out in 1861, Anglin was secure in these beliefs. The few references made in the Morning Freeman to federation were in response to speeches in Canada, an area which intruded very little into the affairs of his adopted Province. Anglin was completely involved in New Brunswick, with little interest in the outside world. His main concern with external events was limited to whatever affected New Brunswick directly. Paramount among these concerns was the Imperial link. New Brunswick was the "Loyalist Province", and Anglin was careful to remind his readers of the loyalty of the Irish Catholics of the Province. In December 1861 he wrote to reject the idea that the Irish of New Brunswick would ever support an American invasion of the Province:

> It is an erroneous idea, that the 'Irish population', because they detest a bad and odious Government in Ireland, must necessarily be disloyal to a good and beneficient Government in these Provinces because it is called by the same name....they too know their duty, and they have never yet been found unfaithful to the Government that protected or to the flag that sheltered them....They value the blessings of liberty, sustained and regulated by law, and tho' bearing no ill-will towards the Americans, entertaining no wish to see the great Republic weakened or humbled, they know their duty to theicountry in which they live and of whose people they are truely an integral part, and knowing it will perform it. 66

Like McGee, Anglin wanted to see the Irish Catholic community accepted as

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66 Ibid., 31 Dec. 1861.

as an "integral part" of life. Ultimately, that would require a certain loss of "Irishness", but Anglin considered such a change to be in the very long-term future of the Province. In the meantime, it was his wish to see New Brunswick enjoy her place in the Empire, secure in Imperial protection. But by 1861, the Empire was no longer as keen to carry on the role of protector and was looking to the colonies to bear their own share of the defense budget. Anglin was not prepared to allow this:

> If England chooses to sever the connection it is for us to submit with all patience and do the best we can to protect and take care of ourselves; but while we form part of the Empire England must and will do all she can to protect our soil - not, indeed, for our sake but for her own. The people of the colonies have already shown that they are willing to do their part. They know that if ever there be a war with the United States while these Provinces are part of the Empire, it will be an Imperial war, and that the Empire, not these poor Provinces, must bear the chief burden of it. 67

Throughout the civil war years, this would be Anglin's stance on defense: we are part of the Empire, therefore the Empire has the duty to protect herself. He castigated those English journalists who dared suggest that a war fought in British North America should be financed and fought primarily by British North Americans.[68]

The main impetus for Anglin's strong editorials on the subject of defense was the very real danger of hostilities with the United States. In January 1862 he examined the changed nature of the neighbouring republic, noting its new militaristic character under a powerful President. That a fundamnetal transformation had come over the United States was clear to him.[69] On February 1, 1862 he wrote an editorial titled, "War

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[67] Ibid., 7 Aug. 1862.

[68] Ibid., 12, 16 Aug. 1862.

[69] Ibid., 25 Jan. 1862.

or Peace", in which he concluded that a "war with England at no distant day is far from improbable" for the United States;[70] and that New Brunswick would be a major battle-ground in such a war seemed inevitable. Anglin, therefore, was faced with much the same quandary as McGee in Canada. Both saw the danger of war and the unwillingness of England to bear the burden of defense as a threat that demanded action. But whereas McGee called for Canadian action, Anglin demanded that the Empire meet her commitments of honour. McGee saw the emergency as an opportunity for Canadians to act together in the face of a common danger, hence building bridges to a common nationality based on common experiences and history. Anglin, on the other hand, wanted to continue with the status quo. The Empire was essential to New Brunswick's continued development and growth. Under the sheltering power of the Empire, the Province was secure and stable. Ultimately, Anglin's loyalty was to the Province, not the Empire, but as long as the Empire was prepared to play its proper role, as Anglin saw it, then he would uphold the Imperial link. But let that link become detrimental to New Brunswick, and he would happily break the connection.

The attachment to the Empire was closely related to Anglin's views on federation and the new nationality. Federation he viewed with great suspicion, seeing it as a danger to the Imperial link that safeguarded the integrity of the Province. He was very much aware that the current thinking in England tended to see the colonies of North America as an

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[70] Ibid., 1 Feb. 1862.

embarrassing complication which might draw them into war with the United States. When the Confederation project gained prominence in 1864, he was convinced that the London politicians were using it for their own ends:

> This new agitation for a Union arose out of the difficulties of Canadian politicians, but the Imperial Government seized almost with avidity on this opportunity for preparing the way virtually to get rid of this part of the Empire. 71

In fact, it would seem that the events of 1864 caught Anglin completely by surprise. Until 1863, he had given the idea of federation little thought, as the columns of the Morning Freeman indicate. The lesser scheme of a union of the Maritime Provinces, warmly supported by successive Lieutenant-Governors of New Brunswick, was one which Anglin saw as both feasible and beneficial to his country:

> There can be no doubt that at the present day a union of the three Lower Provinces would be of vast benefit in many ways to them all, and that if the people were properly alive to their own interests such a union would be demanded at once. 72

However, after this brief mention in May 1862, Anglin ignored the subject for another year. Reflecting the complacency of the New Brunswick people, Anglin was in no mood to change anything. The Province was doing well without taking any risks with new constitutional arrangements. What was to change Anglin's attitudes was the interference of an outsider in the affairs of New Brunswick.

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[71] Ibid., 25 Aug. 1864.

[72] Ibid., 10 May 1862.

McGee's speech in St. John in August 1863 marked the beginning of Anglin's serious study of the federation question in the pages of the Morning Freeman. In fact, McGee said nothing that was new. He made clear his hope for a Federation of British North America, warning that the new militancy of the United States necessitated such a union in matters of defense:

> I advocate the union of the Provinces on, among other grounds, that of providing for the common defense. 73

He agreed with Anglin that defense was an Imperial duty, but argued that the Provinces too ought to contribute to the support of a militia body. On the question of defense, McGee claimed that an Intercolonial Railway was the most important requirement for the speedy movement of troops and supplies throughout the Provinces. Such a railway would also facilitate travel and combat ignorance among the colonies concerning one another:

> It is Intercolonial ignorance which primarily stands in the way of the Intercolonial Railroad. 74

Union, McGee went on, would attract many of those immigrants now going to the United States, since federation would give the Provinces a higher profile than they had separately. Turning to the United States and the war there, he said that America had changed and the British North American Provinces had to change also if they were to survive and not be absorbed into the neighbouring republic. That would be a tragedy, since the nature of society there had led to a Civil War, a breakdown in social standards

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[73] Montreal Gazette, 13 Aug. 1863.

[74] Ibid.

and the family, as well as an assault on religion. Summing up, McGee called on the press of the Maritimes to encourage the spread of information from Province to Province in order to combat the ignorance he described. He looked for daring and vision, which, in the North American context, could so quickly be turned into reality. It was a typical McGee speech, inspiring yet practical.

Anglin's response to the speech was sharp and severe. He had nothing good to say about McGee's remarks, content to believe that McGee had blamed the republican form of government for all the ills of the United States. This McGee had not done. He made it plain that he had expected a social, not a political breakdown in America, due to democracy, and not republicanism. Anglin himself had said much the same thing in his articles in the Morning Freeman, and had condemned the rule of "the Sovreign Mob" in the United States.[75] He had also condemned the nativism and corruption of that country. Anglin branded McGee as a visionary and impractical. He had no time for any "new nationality", and as for encouraging a greater vision among politicians, he thought it enough "to be known merely as inhabitants of British America as subjects of the British Empire".[76]

The defense issue was likewise dismissed. Anglin could see no way in which federation would improve the defense capabilities of the provinces:

> If you could believe these men, the mere act of union would give us military and naval strength, would bring us a population. 77

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[75] Morning Freeman, 25 Apr. 1861

[76] Ibid., 13 Aug. 1863.

[77] Ibid.

Anglin then expressed his fundamental question with regard to federation: what good would it do New Brunswick?[78] This was his constant theme through the following year and a half. The McGee speech at St. John was important, not for what he said, since there was nothing new in it, but for the effect it had on Anglin. For the first time, he came down against federation à la McGee, and that was to have serious consequences for the cause of Confederation in New Brunswick. It is hard to know to what extent Anglin's reaction to McGee was based on personal dislike, rather than differences of opinion on constitutional matters. Anglin probably resented an outsider, especially a famous Irish Catholic journalist, coming into his country and trying to change things. Anglin's standing in the Irish Catholic community was based on his background and position as a spokesman for their interests. McGee had more credibility on each of these issues. He had been the rebel in 1848, and had done tremendous work for Irish Catholics in the United States and Canada. Perhaps Anglin felt threatened by McGee's reputation, especially in a larger sphere under federation. Anglin seems not to have been against federation per se. He had actually said in the New Brunswick Assembly a few weeks before McGee's speech that "the British North American Colonies should be joined in one great nation".[79] He thought such a union to be impractical at that time, but that hardly explains the force of his condemnation of McGee's ideas in August 1863. The idea of a new nationality may have been irretrievably linked in his mind with the originator of the phrase.

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[78] Ibid., 13 Aug. 1863; 30 Aug., 8 Sep. 1864.

[79] Ibid., 11 Apr. 1863.

IV. Conflicts and conferences

At this pivotal point in the development of Timothy Anglin's thoughts on the subject of federation and union, political events in his Province were moving toward a new departure also. Arthur Hamilton Gordon, Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of New Brunswick, was preparing a new initiative to bring about his own pet project - a union of the Maritime Provinces. Gordon had been increasingly impatient with political affairs in New Brunswick ever since he arrived in 1861. The corruption and sectionalism of the Assembly horrified him, as members boasted openly about buying votes at elections. Even the introduction of the secret ballot in 1862 had not stopped the bribery and graft. The members were involved in "pork-barrel" politics, using their influence and position to gain advantage for their constituents and themselves. The proceedings in the House were often interspersed with fights, verbal and physical, and name-calling was of a particularly coarse nature. Even the relatively well-behaved Anglin could refer to the Speaker of the House as "a low, worthless blackguard" and "a pothouse brawler andsswaggerer".[80] That the Speaker might merit such language was but a further sign of how insular and provincial were the politics and politicians of New Brunswick. This problem was not peculiar to that Province; McGee and Moylan had commented on it in Canada also, and McGee had made reference to it in his Halifax

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[80] Ibid., 8 Mr. 1864.

speech in July 1863. But Gordon was not about to let it continue without making efforts to change the situation. His solution was Maritime Union, believing that, in the wider sphere of activity provided by such a merger, politicians would rise to higher standards of political and parliamentary conduct. To that end, he approached Samuel Tilley, the one politician he trusted, and convinced him of the need for Maritime Union. By early 1864 he had come to an agreement with the leading politician of Nova Scotia, Charles Tupper, to call a conference to discuss the question. Prince Edward Island also showed interest in the scheme. But, in the memorable phrase of W.S. MacNutt, in New Brunswick "Government was tame, but the people were not".[81] Government only moved in response to public opinion, and public opinion was not interested in any scheme of Maritime Union. So, by the early summer of 1864, although the Assembly had agreed to send delegates to a conference to discuss the scheme, none had been appointed and no date or venue had been arranged for the conference. It was at this point that Canada chose to intervene in the affairs of the Lower Provinces.

Canada's own political affairs were in a state of crisis. McGee had returned from his tour of the Maritimes in 1863 to a country that had almost run out of options politically. The government of Sandfield Macdonald had not enough support in the House to do more than carry on normal day-to-day business. It was a matter of time before it had to fall, if only through inanition. McGee carried on preaching his cause.

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[81] MacNutt, W.S., New Brunswick: A History, 1784-1867, (Toronto, 1963), p. 406.

In late November 1863, he was reported calling for a good library for Montreal, and also speaking out against an Irish-American secret organization, the Fenians, with whom he would have more dealings in the future months.[82] James Moylan called on Irishmen of all traditions to unite against the "Scotch Clear Grits" of the Macdonald Government.[83] McGee and Moylan had now reached the same place politically. Both had turned against the Reformers, and both had found in John A. Macdonald and the Conservatives a political home they could be comfortable with. McGee's political affiliation in the House of Assembly was always judged more on how closely a group reflected his own beliefs than on party loyalties. Hence, in his parliamentary career in Canada, he served in both a Reform and a Conservative Government, as well as sitting as an Independent. His was not a party political career, but rather an ideological crusade in which he combined on an ad hoc basis with whatever group would support his campaign for a new nationality. The Reformers in the Sandfield Macdonald Government had failed him, and he found in John A. Macdonald a kindred soul, after a fashion. Like McGee, Macdonald would not be tied down by labels, though it was from a pragmatic, not an ideological point of view. Macdonald the pragmatist was praised by Moylan as:

> One of the few leading men in Upper Canada who has had sufficient statesmanship to see...from a broad national point of view. 84

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[82] Montreal Gazette, 26, 28 Nov. 1863.

[83] Canadian Freeman, 15 Oct. 1863.

[84] Ibid., 7 Apr. 1863.

Sandfield Macdonald, on the other hand, was "The Clear Grit Thug".[85] McGee campaigned with John Macdonald in Leeds at a bye-election in January 1864, during which they became close friends and McGee obviously enjoyed Macdonald's ideas as well as his company. When the Assembly reconvened, he was attacked by the Grits as a traitor and a turn-coat for joining with the Conservatives. McGee never tried to excuse the past, and spoke openly in his speeches about apparent inconsistencies in his career. In December 1863 he had spoken on "The Future of Canada", and dealt with another issue raised by various opponents:

> It may be said that it is rather strange for an Irishman, who spent his youth in resisting that government in his native country, to be found among the admirers of the British Constitutional government in Canada. To that this is my reply - if in my day Ireland had been governed as Canada is now, I would have been as sound a conservative as is to be found in Ireland. 86

In spite of the attacks of the Grits, it is typical of McGee that in his relations with George Brown there was a return to something of their former intimacy, and the Grit leader always dealt gently with the new Conservative convert.[87] As always, McGee's aim was to end strife and sectarianism in Canadian political life, and his continued friendship with Brown, in spite of his treatment at the hands of Brown's followers, was to do much to establish future working partnerships among men of different parties in the Province.

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[85] Ibid., 18 Feb. 1864.

[86] Ibid., 3 Dec. 1863.

[87] Careless, J.M.S., Brown of the Globe, (Toronto, 1963), Vol.II, p. 119.

In March 1864, acting on information from unknown sources, McGee announced to the House that thetthree Maritime Provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island had agreed to a scheme of union. He was rather premature in his news and his language appears somewhat fanciful in the light of actual feeling in the Maritimes themselves:

> Laying aside all partisan and personal considerations, the leading spirits of the Maritime Provinces have simultaneously agreed to unite...into one great maritime community. 88

Just four days later he seconded a motion by George Brown to set up a committee of the House to study constitutional reform for Canada. This was to be a major advance on the road to Confederation as members of all sides joined together under Brown's direction to seriously and privately talk out the problems besetting the Province. The initial motion was not put to a vote. On March 21, the Government of Sandfield Macdonald resigned. In the ensuing election, McGee stood unopposed in Montreal West, the people of the constituency showing their appreciation for their member by presenting him with a house of his own that April.

In the new Government of John A. Macdonald, McGee held the portfolio of Minister for Agriculture and Immigration. An old ambition of McGee's was finally realized. But in every other way it seemed that nothing had been changed by the election. The first division for the Conservative Government was won by only two votes. The forces of sectionalism were

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[88]Legislative Assembly of Canada Debates, Canadian Library Association Microfilm, 10 March, 1864.

still at work in Canada ensuring continued instability in government. In May Brown reintroduced his motion for a bipartisan committee on the Constitution, and again McGee seconded the motion. The committee was voted through this time, although John A. Macdonald voted against it. Nevertheless, he was appointed to the committee, along with Sandfield Macdonald, who had voted in favour, McGee, Cartier, Galt, and Brown himself, who chaired the proceedings. The committe produced a report in favour of a Federation of British North America as a solution to the problems of the United Provinces. Both Macdonalds voted against the report, John A. because he wanted a straightforward legislative union rather than a federal one, as the report recommended. The same day the Brown Committee reported to the House, the Conservatives were, as predicted, defeated on a minor issue. It seemed that another powerless government would have to be concocted. But this time, with the recent experience of co-operating on the Brown Committee behind them, the politicians of Canada found annew alternative. Brown joined with John A. Macdonald, Galt and Cartier in a series of negotiations which led to the formation of the Great Coalition of June 1864. The Coalition was committed to the Federal Union of the Canadas, with a larger union of British North America should that prove possible. The new Government, with McGee retaining the Immigration portfolio, sought an invitation to the conference on Maritime Union which they believed was already planned. The Canadians were about to interrupt the political life of the Maritimes with profound consequences.

James Moylan was distrustful of the new Coalition. He saw it as

a move of expediency, not principle, and Moylan was pessimistic about its likely results.[89] However, tied securely to both McGee and Macdonald, He was willing to wish the experiment well:

> If...the coalition is simply for the purpose of bringing about a federation of all the provinces and nothing further; well and good. We wish it the largest possible degree of success. 90

Timothy Anglin was likewise sceptical of Brown's motives and considered the future of Canada to be as uncertain as ever: "the end is not yet".[91] When he heard of the request of the Canadian politicians to attend the Maritime Conference, Anglin was convinced that the Canadian plan was to push ahead with the Intercolonial Railway.[92] In August, McGee led a party of Canadian journalists, politicians and businessmen on a tour of the Maritimes, eager to introduce one Province to the others. The Canadians and the Maritimers enjoyed each other's company and the entire climate of opinion in New Brunswick, antagonistic to Canada over past differences, warmed to the Canadians in the jovial conviviality of McGee's speeches and jokes at Canadian expense. McGee was well-known in the Maritimes and well-liked. His role in bringing people together in an atmosphere of friendship and good humour did much to make the tour a real success, and this made the future relations between Canadians and Maritimers that much more relaxed and open. Anglin, however, was not at all impressed. At a banquet in honour of the Canadian visitors in St. John,

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[89] Canadian Freeman, 4 Aug. 1864.

[90] Ibid., 1 Sep. 1864.

[91] Morning Freeman, 23 June 1864.

[92] Ibid., 23 Aug. 1864.

he made a speech in which he declared himself opposed to Confederation on the old grounds of impracticality and danger to the Imperial link. He claimed that Confederation was merely a step towards total separation from the Empire; but he rather spoiled his case by ending with a declaration that:

> He did not wish them to suppose from what he haddsaid that he was absolutely opposed to a Union of the Provinces at any time or on any terms. He believed that ultimately the destiny of these Provinces must be either to drift into annexation with the United States or to form one great Union or Confederation of some sort. 93

The report of this speech was not published until November. In fact, Anglin made no comment in the Morning Freeman on the issue until after the McGee delegation had left the country. He was then quick to pass judgement on the supporters of Confederation:

> Like Mr. McGee...they have no plan, no scheme, no definite system. Their whole stock in trade is a few poetically vague and misty ideas. 94

Anglin failed to realize that what he saw as "the ultimate destiny" of the Provinces had arrived, at least in the minds of the supporters of Confederation. The threat from the United States, when seen in the context of Imperial withdrawal from defense committments to the Provinces, meant that the choice was urgent and pressing. Anglin carried on in his faith in Imperial action, declaring that Confederation was not necessary for defense.[95]

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[93] Ibid., 19 Nov. 1864.

[94] Ibid., 27 Aug. 1864.

[95] Ibid., 1 Sep. 1864.

> Mr. McGee said...that if we were united, a blow given at Sarnia would be felt in Halifax; but as we now are, a blow at Sarnia would be felt in London even more keenly than at Halifax. 96

This was to ignore the many warnings from London that any blow in British America might not be felt at all in London.

In Canada, James Moylan too was caught by surprise by the speed of events. His ideas of federation differed from McGee's. Moylan saw the Federation scheme as involving total separation from the Empire, as Anglin did. But, whereas Anglin rejected the idea for that reason, Moylan welcomed it as the only safe course:

> Argue as we may, our only safety is in becoming a nation distinct from that of the British Empire, whatever kindly sympathies and relations may still exist between us and the land of our fathers. 97

At first, Moylan seemed prepared to allow the future prospects of federation to compensate for the short-term problems of Canada:

> Although it [Federation] may not bear instantaneously upon the development of out internal resources, or the amelioration of our financial difficulties; yet it will pave the way to our speedy independence, and immediately alter the attitude assumed towards us by the American Republic. 98

But almost immediately, he began to echo Anglin's cry of:

> What good or benefit, great or small, now beyond our reach, can be attained by means of such a union? 99

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[96] Ibid., 20 Sep. 1864.

[97] Canadian Freeman, 6 Oct. 1864.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Morning Freeman, 30 Aug. 1864.

Moylan questioned whether Confederation would really change anything for Canada, since it would not add a "pickaxe, loom or shovel", a phrase he used on a number of occasions to describe the immigrants he believed were vital to Canada's future and which Confederation would do little to attract.[100] Moylan agreed with Anglin also in believing that the British Government were behind the entire scheme:

> There is strong presumptive evidence that the grand confederation scheme now before the country has been accelerated by the recent and indirect influence of the British Government. 101

Both men were groping in the dark. They wrote their articles ignorant of what exactly Confederation would mean, and therefore fearful of what it might mean. Moylan feared for Catholics caught in the predominantly Protestant Province of Upper Canada without the Lower Canadian support of the French Catholics. In the columns of the Globe he saw the future laws of a Protestant Canada:

> In the face of the merciless crusade invoked against us with such hardy atrocity, the possible Federation of the Provinces looms up before us menacing and portentious. 102

Anglin feared for the independence of his country, New Brunswick; and he cautioned that once a decision in favour of Confederation was taken, it would not be possible to reverse direction:

> While we maintain our independence we have an absolute

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[100] Canadian Freeman, 13, 20 Oct., 2 Nov. 1864.

[101] Ibid., 20 Oct. 1864.

[102] Ibid., 17 Nov. 1864.

> right to accept or reject any proposition that may be made to us.

And the old loyalty cry was used against those who would risk the link with the Empire:

> It does not satisfy them to belong to that Empire; it is not greatness enough for them; they want to be known as belonging to a Great North American nation. 103

Finally, he wondered what was to be gained by it all:

> In this great new nation can we find any trade that will be advantageous to us? What have we to send to Canada? What has Canada to send to us? 104

As they wondered and waited, along with the people of British North America, their future was being decided by a gathering of their political leaders.

When the Canadian request to attend the Maritime Conference was received in June 1864, there was simply no conference arranged for them to attend. The apathy of the various Assemblies had frustrated Gordon's efforts. Now there was a hurried decision to convene a conference at Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, for September 1. Gordon should have been pleased, but he was not. He wondered what the Canadians wanted at his conference. He was not in favour of a general Federation of all the Provinces, since he saw that a Federal Parliament would only take the cream of New Brunswick politicians, such as they were, leaving the dross behind in the local Assembly. The last state would be far worse than the

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[103] Morning Freeman, 20 Sep. 1864.

[104] Ibid., 24 Sep. 1864.

first. The Canadians were invited to state their case to the Maritimers when the conference opened, and, faced with the eloquence of Brown, Galt, Cartier, McGee and Macdonald, the lesser scheme of Maritime Union had little chance. It was decided to postpone discussion of the lesser union and to convene a conference on federation of the British North American Provinces at Quebec in October. On the way home from the Charlottetown Conference, McGee and most of the Canadian delegation stopped in St. John, New Brunswick, where they were welcomed at a banquet. At the event, a toast was proposed to "Colonial Union". The only man not to stand for the toast was Timothy Warren Anglin.[105]

Anglin was not prepared even to consider whatever proposals might come from the Quebec Conference. As early as September, during the first Charlottetown meetings, he declared:

> Whatever the delegates may think or say, the people are by no means prepared for such a measure....The people don't want it. 106

He was perhaps even more confirmed in his opposition by the reports that came from the Prince Edward Island newspaper closest to the Conference proceedings, Edward Whelan's Charlottetown Examiner, which stated bluntly that "By Confederation...we are certain there must be a separation from England".[107] Moylan, still concerned with Protestant persecution of Catholics in a Federal system, asked in December:

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[105]Slattery, p. 242.

[106]Morning Freeman, 13 Sep. 1864.

[107]Examiner,(Charlottetown), 10 Sep. 1864.

> If Confederation be the only thing attainable, we desire that it should in its nature approach as nearly as possible to the character of a Legislative Union. 108

This, he believed, would give adequate protection for minority groups, as well as providing a more stable form of government. However that was not acceptable to some of the delegates at the conference and was dropped as an option.

The conferences introduced to the Canadian politicians a new face. Edward Whelan, Irish Catholic journalist and owner of the Charlottetown Examiner had been appointed a delegate from Prince Edward Island. Whelan was already known to McGee from the latter's tours of the Maritimes and they had renewed their acquaintance at the Charlottetown Conference in September. Like Anglin, Whelan had spent much of his time in Prince Edward Island deeply involved with the political and social affairs of the Province and had not considered seriously the idea of Confederation or a new nationality until the Canadian involvement of June 1864. Faced with the issue, Whelan asked his readers:

> Shall we, then, think seriously about a Federal Union? We believe we ought. Great Britain is constantly urging upon our attention a Union of some kind. The only kind of Union we can have is a Federal one. That means little or nothing short of separation from Great Britain....If we make up our minds for an Independent Federation...we must prepare to bid goodbye to old Mother England, and to lay on the shelf with other rubbish those antiquated notions of loyalty for which she herself has not now that sentimental regard. 109

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[108] Canadian Freeman, 15 Dec. 1864.

[109] Examiner, 22 Aug. 1864.

It was clear that Whelan had little regard for the Imperial connection and sought in Confederation an independent nation on the lines of Moylan's ideas. Loyalty was not a feature of Whelan's attitude to the current state of the constitutional position of the island. However, Quebec was to change his ideas radically. He left Prince Edward Island on October 7, 1864 to go to the Quebec Conference vowing that he would "earnestly labour to be guided by a strict regard for the interest of my adopted country" of Prince Edward Island.[110] But the experience of the Conference soon opened his mind to the possibilities of a new nationality for North America and his provincial nationalist language gave way to something closer to McGee's. By October 11 he was saying that:

> the prospects for the future of British America are of the most encouraging description, that the destinies of all the Provinces are in safe hands. 111

The next day he voted in favour of a general federation of the Provinces.[112] By the end of the Conference on November 14, Whelan was advocating the publication of the Resolutions adopted at that gathering:

> theelesssecrecy that is practised, the more likelihood there is of gaining public opinion in favour of the great Confederation scheme. 113

So complete was Whelan's conversion to Confederation that he took to calling his "adopted country", Prince Edward Island, an "obstacle in the

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[110] Ibid., 10 Oct. 1864.

[111] Ibid., 17 Oct. 1864.

[112] Ibid., 24 Oct. 1864.

[113] Ibid., 14 Nov. 1864.

way of progress".[114] Whelan was a late-comer to the stage of Confederation and he left early. In December 1867 he died in Charlottetown, knowing that Prince Edward Island had rejected the great Confederation scheme.

The proceedings of the Quebec Conference were overshadowed by the news of a raid on three banks in the town of St. Albans in Vermont. The raiders had claimed to be Southern Confederates, killed one man, and fled across the border into Canada with $206,000. The American Government reacted angrily, as did the American press. General Dix of the Northern Army, wanted to send his troops into Canada at once to capture the raiders. Although fourteen of the twenty-one raiders were captured, along with about $80,000 of the stolen money, their treatment while awaiting trial in Canada further incensed the Americans. The Confederates were well-housed and fed, and were free to read the newspapers and mix without restrictions. Their jail was the home of their jailer. The trial was begun in November, and then postponed until December. When it restarted, the presiding judge almost immediately released the prisoners on a technicality without binding them over. In addition, the recovered money was handed back to the Confederates who promptly disappeared.

The fiery General Dix again ordered an invasion of Canada, though this was later countermanded by President Lincoln. McGee and others in the Government of Canada realized the extreme danger of the hour. Almost unwittingly, Canadians had found themselves on the brink of war with the United States; without any help from the Empire, they had brought them-

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[114] Ibid., 20 Feb. 1865.

selves once again to the point of being invaded and overrun by the furious American army. Prime Minister Macdonald moved quickly to save the situation, ordering the rearrest of the raiders and a new trial. He also offered to reimburse the banks of St. Alban's to the extent of $50,000. By the beginning of 1865 the St. Alban's affair was petering out; but it had had a serious effect on the thinking of British North Americans. Until then, they had been sure that only a war between England and the United States would bring them into conflict with their southern neighbour, and in such a situation the Empire would have to protect them. But suddenly it was clear that another scenario was possible, one in which the Empire might be uninvolved. There was real fear that such an eventuality would leave the Provinces alone against the might of the armies of the United States. After the St. Alban's raid and its sequel, British Americans also feared that the Southern Confederacy had planned the entire chain of events deliberately in order to start a war which would distract the Northern armies and present the South with much-needed time to regroup. Such an idea made the people of British America very nervous and much more aware of their need for each other and for closer relations between the Provinces in the matter of defense. It was, indeed, a happy coincidence that the raid on Vermont should happen as the Quebec Conference met, and the sense of imminent and common danger stirred up by the crisis, similar to that of the Trent crisis, helped to prepare people's minds for new ideas, ideas that might give more security to the British Provinces. The actual risk of invasion was probably slight,

since the American administration was not prepared to enter into further military conflicts after the draining years of the Civil War, now drawing to a close. But the uncertainty in the minds of Canadians and Maritimers was very real.

Agreement had been reached by the delegates on the future Union of the British Provinces; now it was their task to convince their respective Assemblies and peoples of the merits of the plan and of its necessity. Although it may have seemed certain that the Canadian Assembly would vote in favour of the plan, owing to the majority enjoyed by the Great Coalition, the result was by no means sure. Aside from the French Canadian radicals of Lower Canada, there were many in the Upper Province too who did not like the actual terms agreed upon. If even Moylan's feelings were unsure, how could McGee be assured that this central part of the new nationality would get enough votes in the House? McGee was well aware that a new nationality needed the support of the people and so, as the old year ended, Thomas D'Arcy McGee set out to ensure that the work would be brought to a happy conclusion. In February 1865 he rose in the Canadian House of Assembly to speak on the Quebec Resolutions. He tried to encapsulate in one speech all the many strands that made up his argument for a new nationality. He recalled the great warning of the Americans, sounding out the alarm against invasion, either military or economic, that would rob British North Americans of their birthright and freedom.[115] He then reminded the Canadian members of the warning given by the Empire that it was time for a new relationship between Mother Country and Colonies, one

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[115] McGee, Two Speeches, p. 20.

that would demand new unity and strength from the Provinces that they could not have separately.[116] He tried to show that Confederation would strengthen, not weaken, the link with the Empire since British North America would then be less of a burden and more of an attraction to England.[117] He looked for a higher sense of duty on the part of politicians than they had known before:

> Federation, I hope, may supply to all our public men just ground for uniting in nobler and more profitable contests than those which have signalized the past. 118

Finally, gladly and proudly admitting to be the father of the phrase "a new nationality", now common among the proponents of the scheme of Confederation,[119] he called on his colleagues to make it a reality:

> If you want to feel any patriotism on the subject; if you want to stir up a common sentiment of affection between these people and ourselves, bring us all into a closer relation together, and having the elements of a vigorous nationality with us, each will find something to like and respect in the other; mutual confidence and respect will follow, and a feeling of being engaged in a common cause for the good of a common nationality will grow up of itself without being forced by any man's special advocacy. 120

It must have seemed to McGee in the early months of 1865 that the dreams of Young Ireland were coming true in North America. He said that the sequence of events culminating in the Quebec Conference were of a

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[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid., p. 21.

[118] Ibid., p.15.

[119] Ibid., p. 13.

[120] Ibid., p. 26.

miraculous nature and might never come again.[121] The Quebec Resolutions were passed by the Canadian Assembly, much to McGee's delight. It seemed that his dream was coming true; but in the years to come, McGee would come face to face with the problems of Young Ireland yet again, as his work and dreams became threatened by another band of men who dreamed of the day when Ireland "long a province, be a Nation once again".

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[121] Ibid., p. 30.

CHAPTER FOUR

DIVIDED LOYALTIES

With the formulation of the Quebec Resolutions, the groundwork for Confederation had been completed. What was hoped for was a quick ratification by the Provincial Assemblies, followed by a final conference in London to draw up the actual terms for the British North America Act, by which Confederation would be officially implemented. McGee recognized that Confederation was but one step on the way to a new nationality: the political framework in which a common identity could develop among the people of the Provinces. Anglin had certainly suffered a reversal: his local nationality was in danger of being overtaken by the new. Moylan, as usual, was waiting to see how things would work out before deciding on his attitude. In early 1865 it seemed merely a matter of time before the Provinces of British North America were united in a Federal system that would be the incubator for a new nationality in British America.

But the relative ease with which the Quebec Resolutions had been passed in Canada was deceptive. Not only was there well-organized opposition to Confederation in other Provinces, there was also a major crisis approaching in the affairs of Irish Catholic community that would have tremendous consequences both for that community as a whole, and for the future course of Confederation itself.

I. Anglin's Confederation debate

As the delegates to the Quebec Conference made their way home, it became clear that the future hopes of Confederation were restingoon the Province of New Brunswick. The scheme could possibly survive without the involvement of the two island Provinces of Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island; but without New Brunswick, the entire scheme would be impossible to implement. For even if Nova Scotia voted to accept the idea of Confederation, a doubtful possibility in itself, the withdrawal of New Brunswick would make such an acceptance a geographical impossibility. Then, New Brunswick alone could provide the new nation with an open Atlantic winter port. Without that, much of the economic reason for Confederation would collapse. But as Premier Samuel Tilley arrived back from the Quebec Conference, he faced an unexpectedly strong opposition. The future seemed to hang on the strength of public opinion in that Province, and Timothy Warren Anglin was ready for battle.

When he heard that the Quebec Resolutions would not be made public before they were presented to the Assembly, Anglin saw a threat to the rights of the people of New Brunswick:

> This is clearly a conspiracy to defraud and cheat the people out of the right to determine for themselves whether this Union shall now take place. 1

On November 15, 1864, Anglin had published the main points agreed upon at Quebec, happy with his scoop over the Confederates. Once again he pointed

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[1] Morning Freeman, 3 Nov. 1864.

out the impracticality of the scheme, as he saw it:

> We are not one people with Canada, and no laws of Imperial or local legislatures can in an instant make us one....We are and for many years we must remain, distinct communities, with many interests either conflicting or not common. With Nova Scotia, a great part of which is within sight of this City, with which we now do a large trade, a real union may be possible. A union with Canada can not in our day be such an amalgamation that we will cease to consider ourselves or to be different communities. [2]

In a detailed refutation of the Quebec scheme two days later, Anglin laid down the precise areas in which he disagreed with Confederation:

a) It would involve a loss of legislative "sovereignty" for New Brunswick.

b) Representation by population would deprive the country of proper influence in the House of Commons, since there would only be fifteen members from the Province in a House of 194.

c) The scheme was only a legislative union in disguise, since the local assemblies were a "sham" that would soon be done away with.

d) It would involve tax increases, since New Brunswick would be paying for Canada's deficit and grandiose western schemes.

e) New Brunswick would be swamped by Canadian manufactures.[3]

In a series of articles beginning on November 22, 1864, Anglin tried to prove the economic disaster that would follow Confederation. The very vagueness of the predictions made by Tilley gave added credibility to Anglin's predictions and did great harm to the Confederation

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[2] Ibid., 15 Nov. 1864.

[3] Ibid., 17 Nov. 1864.

cause in the Province. As Anglin said in response to a vague listing of benefits for New Brunswick under the scheme:

> If any man thinks he can utter greater nonsense in coherent language, let him try. 4

On December 10, Anglin took pleasure in reporting that Tilley and Galt were in disagreement over the basic economic premises of Confederation, and were contradicting each other on the estimates. The question of the advantages for the defense of the country advocated under Confederation also got short shrift from the Irish editor. He refused to believe that Britain would ever renege on its defense commitments to British North America: the Imperial link was too strong. Even when a pro-Confederation delegate, John Gray, warned that such an eventuality was likely should Confederation be rejected, Anglin replied, "The thing is really too absurd".[5] Nor did he think that the colonies should send the wrong signals to Downing Street by bearing too great share of the defense burden:

> Now our idea is that these Provinces are still part of the British Empire; that an invasion of any one of these provinces is an invasion of the Empire and would be resisted as such; and that...the responsibility of repelling such an invasion would rest primarily on the Imperial Government, and that we should do nothing, which, without relieving us from the danger of invasion, would seem to relieve the Imperial Government of the responsibility, which, as matters now stand, rests upon it. 6

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[4] Ibid., 24 Nov. 1864.

[5] Ibid., 22 Dec. 1864.

[6] Ibid., 17 Jan. 1865.

This was the foundation of Anglin's ideology: New Brunswick was a part of the Imperial domain and nothing should be done to risk that position, especially not for some "visionary" scheme like a new nationality. Anglin had absolutely no time for such an idea; he could see nothing wrong with the old nationality:

> [Anglin] wondered that men who talked so much of loyalty did not believe it honour and glory enough to belong to the British Empire, and that they thought it would be more glorious to belong to a North American nation. 7
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> If we were no longer part of the British Empire; if we were separate, disjointed States; if we were merely New Brunswickers, Nova Scotians, and Canadians, such an argument [new nationality] as this would have some force; but under the circumstances that really do exist, it is the silliest nonsense....and now it is not Irish or French or any others but the people who pretend to be proud of being known as British subjects, who are so anxious...that they may be able to boast, 'I am a-a-a--what d'ye call 'em'. 8

In November 1864, Anglin published a statement by Tilley that Confedaration did not originate at Westminister, but in Canada. For Anglin that had been sufficient reason to damn the scheme even aside from the general economic reasons. Anglin's nationalism was centred on New Brunswick; he looked on the Province as his "nation", preferably within the Empire.

Samuel Tilley was faced with a harder struggle in New Brunswick than he had expected. The degree of opposition to Confederation surprised him and it increased as the weeks passed and the Quebec terms were ever more

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[7] Ibid., 24 Nov. 1864.

[8] Ibid., 15 Dec. 1864.

minutely scrutinized by the anti-Confederation forces. Since the Assembly was nearing its end, Tilley felt he could not lay the terms before it until after an election. But when to have an election was the question. Lieutenant-Governor Gordon urged Tilley to an early dissolution, thinking that any election in New Brunswick could be won by buying the required votes. Tilley was not as sanguine, realizing the depth of support won by Anglin and the anti-Confederates. Still, he bowed to Gordon's pressure and the election was called for February. Anglin decided to stand for St. John, and the opposition campaign used many of his arguments already in print in the Morning Freeman. The continued vagueness of the Confederation proposals, as they applied to New Brunswick, was a major help to Anglin's colleagues. He himself was tireless in his campaign against Tilley, using the issue of impracticality to beat the Confederates.

Anglin made it clear in the columns of the Morning Freeman that his basic opposition to Confederation was on the grounds of New Brunswick nationalism:

> There shall be no difficulty in defeating this attempt to destroy the independence of this Province. 9

He called on each one who "really loves his country" to go out and vote on this crucial issue. The economic arguments were important insofar as they demonstrated that Confederation would mean economic domination by Canada. When a Confederate candidate was compared with the Irish nationalists, Grattan and Curran, in his eloquence, Anglin acidly remarked:

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[9] Ibid., 24 Jan. 1865.

> Grattan and Curran made speeches to liberate their country, but John [Boyd] to enslave his...to destroy the Legislative independence of his adopted Province or reduce it to a contemptible municipality. 10

Echoing his favourite themes, Anglin warned against Confederation as a threat to the Imperial link:

> No one of common sense can look at the Confederation scheme without perceiving that it is a step towards entire separation from the Empire. 11

He pointed to the detrimental effects of the Act of Union of 1801 on the economic and social fortunes of Ireland, joined to a larger, dominating entity.[12] He gleefully played on the disagreements and discrepancies among the Confederates and their economic statistics, especially when John A. Macdonald announced in the Canadian Assembly that the Quebec terms were not open to change, thereby contradicting what Tilley and Gray had been saying for weeks.[13] Confusion as to the precise route of the Intercolonial Railway, as well as to its cost, gave Anglin ammunition to increase the suspicions of what exactly Confederation would entail for New Brunswick.[14] As Anglin observed after the election:

> One of the misfortunes of the Confederation conspirators was that they could not all agree on their statements; that in their endeavours to deceive and delude the people of different Provinces and districts, they were compelled to tell stories which contradicted one another. 15

For Anglin found great satisfaction in the election results. Of the delegates who had been to the Quebec Conference and were members of

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[10] Ibid., 18 Feb. 1865.

[11] Ibid., 11 Feb. 1865.

[12] Ibid., 26 Jan. 1865.

[13] Ibid., 16 Feb. 1865.

[14] Ibid., 18 Feb. 1865.

[15] Ibid., 4 July, 1865.

the Assembly, none retained their seats. The new Assembly numbered no more than twelve Confederates, while the anti-Confederates picked up every other seat. Anglin himself was elected easily. The Confederates accused the Irish Catholics of voting en bloc at Anglin's instigation. They also accused them of being told how to vote by their priests, a comment on the sectarian quality of New Brunswick politics. Anglin s strongly rejected both charges, saying that the Irish simply voted as they saw fit. He himself, nevertheless, was appointed to the Executive Council in recognition of his political importance in Irish Catholic areas. In a burst of euphoria, Anglin let his true sense of nationality show:

> Standing together, shoulder to shoulder, at the late general elections, we achieved a glorious triumph and saved the country. 16

For Anglin, the election results were as good as a victory in battle in the war against the foreigners of Canada who had tried to seduce New Brunswick away from the Empire. His "country" was saved.

The victory was not long enjoyed. The new anti-Confederate Government under Albert Smith was too weak to govern. It was comprised of those who opposed Confederation per se, as well as those who objected only to the actual terms of the Quebec agreement. These latter would be willing to support a revised scheme of Federation. In addition to the internal problems, the Smith Government was faced with external difficulties too. In the summer of 1865, the American administration gave notice that they

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[16] Ibid., 4 Jan. 1866.

would not renew the Reciprocity Treaty when it expired in 1866. At a stroke, the Smith Government lost the American markets they had been counting on as an alternative to those offered by Confederation. The New Brunswick economy would be hard hit by such a loss; and Anglin's complacent economic theories now seemed to have been built on sand.

Anglin was to find another decision causing him greater anguish than this: the British Government decided not to accept the election results of 1865. On April 1, 1865, the Colonial Secretary, Edward Cardwell, pointed out in a memorandum to Gordon that the defense of the colony was a matter for the people there as well as for the British. In June, he instructed Gordon to:

> express the strong and deliberate opinion of Her Majesty's Government that...all the British North American Colonies should agree to unite in one Government....The Colonies must recognize a right and even acknowledge incumbent on the Home Government to urge with earnestness and just authority any measures which they consider to be expedient on the part of the colonies with a view to their own defense. 17

Anglin was furious. The Empire was deserting New Brunswick. From this time on, it becomes clear that Anglin's nationalism became very much narrower than before. Gordon refered to him as "the most determined isolationist",[18] and Anglin certainly felt betrayed by the Empire. The Premier, Albert Smith, was in England when the Cardwell memorandum arrived, and it was Anglin, left in charge during Smith's absence, who drafted the official reply.[19] In it, he strongly stated the right of the people and govern-

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[17] Cardwell to Gordon, 24 June 1865; quoted in Chapman, J.K., The Career of Arthur Hamilton Gordon, (Toronto, 1964), p. 37.

[18] Baker, William M., Timothy Warren Anglin: Irish Catholic Canadian, (Toronto, U. of T. Press, 1977), p. 98.

[19] MacNutt, W.S., New Brunswick, A History: 1784-1867, (Tornto, 1963), p. 434.

ment of New Brunswick to decide on their own affairs. He felt that the British Government were to abide by that decision:

> To confer on this Province a right of self-government would have been mockery if...the wish of the mother country was in all cases to be followed...whatever the opinion of those to whom the power of judging has been entrusted...and who...consider themselves not unable to judge with respect to their own affairs. When a wish is expressed by Her Majesty's Government, it will be received with that deference which is due to suggestions emanating from so high a souree...but if such views should unfortunately not coincide with the views of those on whom alone the responsibility for action in the Province falls, the Committee [of the Council] feel assured that Her Majesty's Government will expect and desire that the Government of this Province should act according to their own convictions of right, and in conformity with the sentiments of the people they represent. 20

This passage indicates the direction in which Anglin's mind was moving at this time. He was not slow to state that "loyalty" need not mean "submission to the will of colonial secretaries".[21] Gordon referred to Anglin as "an Irish rebel", however inaccurately,[22] and this would be used against Anglin to discredit the Smith Government. There was outrage among the Confederation supporters at the tone of Anglin's memorandum of July, and this added to the strains on the Government. Gordon entered into talks with Tilley to try and arrange a change of government, as his orders from London demanded. Things began to move quickly for Anglin.

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[20] Morning Freeman, 23 Apr. 1867.

[21] Ibid., Aug., Sep. 1865.

[22] Gordon to Cardwell, 8 May 1865, quoted in Baker, p. 81.

In November, Charles Fisher, a prominent supporter of Confederation, and one-time Premier of the Province, was elected in a by-election for the York constituency against the government candidate. On the day the news of the victory was sent to Cardwell by Gordon, the Lieutenant-Governor also informed his superior of Anglin's resignation from the Executive Council. The two events were, in fact, closely linked together.

Anglin's retirement from the Council immediately after Fisher's election was ostensibly over the issue of the European and North American Railway, which he had wanted built by the Government, but which was given out on contract to a private company.[23] But it is very likely that Anglin was seen as weakening Smith's administration in the light of the loyalty issue. The fact that he was thought of as being a Young Ireland rebel only complicated things. The problem for Anglin was that he had never stated clearly whether or not he had actually been "out" in 1848. He preferred to leave it a mystery and so, perhaps, claim the glory without risk. Now the risk had caught up with him. Anglin had always been the object of Confederate attacks on the Government, not only because of his fierce campaign against Federation, but also because of his Catholicism and his perceived influence on his Irish co-religionists. In the York campaign, Fisher made little reference to the Confederation issue, and concentrated instead on Anglin's connections with an Irish-American organization, the Fenian Brotherhood. The attacks on Anglin's loyalty were probably unfair, given his oft-repeated declarations of commitment to New Brunswick and Empire. But it was effective and could be used with

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[23] Ibid., 23 Nov. 1865.

great effect against anti-Confederation candidates in the future.

II. The Fenians

Anglin was not the only Irish Canadian to be affected by the rise of the Fenians in these years. The Fenian Brotherhood and their Irish wing, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, or IRB, played a vital part in the history of Confederation and the new nationality. They would cause the Irish Catholics of British North America great anguish as they were forced to choose sides in a clash of loyalties that would finally put an end to a distinctive Irish Catholic presence in the political life of the North American Colonies. The Fenian Brotherhood was a totally new phenomenon in Irish history: the first Irish-American revolutionary organization. There had been many emigré groups of Irishmen in the United States since the time of the United Irishmen, but this was an American-inspired movement, taking its identity from the environment of the Irish ghettoes of the American north-east. The Irish in America had developed what may best be described as a split mentality. On the one hand, they lived in the every-day world of struggle and opportunity that was the United States. On the other hand, however, they still dreamt of the "old country"; and with time and distance came distortion. Soon the Ireland of reality was lost beneath the weight of memory and romance. The Irish-American was born, with a mythology of his own that took little notice

of reality and thrived on dreams and emotions.

The acknowledged leaders of the Fenians in the early years of the 1860's were John O'Mahony and James Stephens. Both men had taken part in the Young Ireland rebellion in 1848 and had fled to France afterwards. Stephens, in particular, had been active in what little fighting took place in the abortive rising, and spent his time in France involved in European revolutionary groups, learning the ways and methods of secret societies.[24] O'Mahony moved to the United States in 1852, where he got involved with Irish emigré groups. He was a mentally unstable individual, having spent time in mental hospitals, but had produced a good translation of an Irish history into English. In 1858 he wrote to Stephens on behalf of fellow emigrés, asking his friend to set up a revolutionary group in Ireland to be financed and supported by the Irish-American community. Stephens accepted eagerly, being careful to ensure that he would have total control over the new organization. The initiative, however, came from the United States. Stephens' lieutenant, John O'Leary, admitted later that the Fenians were "an American society, formed in the United States".[25]

For the moment, however, the Fenians were organized on both sides of the Atlantic. The Irish section does not directly concern us here; it is enough to say that it appears to have been more of a social, rather than a political event. Men joined the Fenians to enjoy the social and

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[24]Ryan, Desmond, The Fenian Chief, (Miami, 1967), Chaps. 4,5.

[25]O'Leary, John, Fenians and Fenianism, (New York, 1896), Vol. II, p. 153-4.

recreational aspects rather than for ideological purposes. O'Leary was forced to comment on the rather lackadaisical attitude to military planning that characterized the movement in Ireland. In the Irish Fenian newspaper, the Irish People, he said:

> Surely there is a time and a place for all things, and midday marching before a police barracks is neither rational as to time or place. 26

The American parent group was far more serious about itself than the Irish, and Stephens' failure to promote even an attempt at rebellion before 1865 led to widespread dissatisfaction among American Fenians. When, in that year, the British authorities raided the offices of the Irish People, arresting O'Leary and almost the entire Fenian leadership in Ireland, it provoked a strong reaction in the United States that was to have profound consequences for British North America.

The Fenian movement in America had been given a boost by the military ardour of the Civil War years. The Fenians thrived on the anti-British sentiment of these years, and, in return for half-promises of future aid in Fenian actions against England, the administration in Washington found in the Fenians an effective recruiting agent among the Irish-American people. Men were encouraged to join up to gain experience that would be later used against England. This was no empty promise; by the end of the Civil War, there were thousands of Irish-Americans trained in arms and ready to turn against Britain under the Fenian banner. But for a period, the only fighting done was in the form of verbal disputes with other Fenians. There had been developing within the movement a

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[26] Irish People, (Dublin), 12 Mar. 1866. Cited in Comerford, R.V., "Patriotism as Pastime: the appeal of Fenianism in the mid-1860's", Irish Historical Studies, 1980, p. 245.

school of thought that advocated an assault on the British American Provinces rather than one on Ireland. The amazing plan was that the Fenians would capture Canada and use it as a base of operations against England. The feelings of British Americans was expected to be with the Fenians, since these good republicans could not imagine that anyone would be satisfied living under the British Crown. Stephens' failure to rise in Ireland gave this alternative some credibility. Quite simply, there seemed to be nothing else to do, since Ireland was so closely controlled by the authorities. The "Canada" wing of the Fenians took control of the Fenian Convention in Philadelphia in 1865, and O'Mahony's powers as President were limited by the Fenian Senate which later split formally with the O'Mahony wing. Stephens tried desperately to heal the split, coming out strongly against the Senate wing. The new leaders, William Roberts and Thomas Sweeny, were held in high suspicion by the Irish branch who saw any deviation from the primary purpose of freeing Ireland as detrimental to the Fenian cause. O'Leary commented:

> O'Mahony was not, indeed, an ideal leader, but he was an ideal Irishman, while Colonel Roberts (President of the Senate) and most of the Senate were men of whom we knew little and for whom we cared less. 27

The immediate result of this split, so far as the Irish Catholics of British America were concerned, was to bring them under suspicion once again. The Fenian menace against the Provinces would haunt the Irish Catholics, especially those in public office, for the next five years.

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[27] O'Leary, II, p. 213.

Of all the Irish Catholicsjournalists and politicians in British America, it was D'Arcy McGee who most clearly saw the danger Fenianism posed, not just to the Irish Catholic community, but more especially to the hopes for a new nationality under Confederation. From his earliest days in Canada he had spoken out against any group that sought to carry on the feuds of Ireland in British America. It was on this matter that he judged the Orange Order unCanadian, and in his remarks on sectarian secret societies there is a foreshadowing of his opposition to Fenianism:

> We all belong to one lawful political brotherhood - the State. The civil hierarchy we obey....This is the only oath-bound association, with authority to command our political action to which a good citizen can belong. 28

> If any co-religionist of ours should so forget himself as to propagate a secret society among Catholics, we volunteer our heartiest aid to arrest the evil and punish the offender. 29

It is impossible to know just when McGee learned of the existence of the Fenians. His first public attack on them followed the Trent crisis in 1861. He learned that many of those who had opposed his attempt to raise an Irish Catholic regiment were actually Fenians from the United States who had come to Montreal for the purpose of opposing him. He condemned them in a letter to the Montreal Herald, under the name Civis Canadiensis.[30] Then, in March 1864, a new Irish association in Montreal, the Hibernian Society, held a St. Patrick's Day banquet during which, it was reported, "one speaker said he hoped the day was fast approaching when all Irishmen would be a Fenian Brotherhood, and Britain as a nation would cease to

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[28] New Era, (Montreal), 16 July, 1857.

[29] Ibid., 21 July, 1857.

[30] Montreal Gazette, 23 Mar. 1864.

exist".[31] This association was to become the core of Fenian activity in British America and McGee was quick to reveal its roots. In a letter to the Montreal Gazette on March 23, he expressed regret that any Irishman in Canada would get involved with the Fenians, and he laid great stress on the fact that O'Mahony was a "spiritualist" who had spent some time in a mental asylum. Then he expressed his own strategy for dealing with the organization:

> For my part, I advise that both the punishment of publicity and the penalties of the law should at once be put in force against these propagandists. Seditious societies are like what the farmers in Ireland used to say of scotch grass; that only way to destroy it was to cut it up by the roots, burn it to powder, and cast the ashes to the four winds. 32

Clearly, McGee had no sympathy with the Fenians and meant to do all he could to defy them in Canada and punish them by publicity in order to protect Irish Catholics from their own emotional involvement.

That there was such a danger was at first hard to believe. It seemed unlikely that Fenianism was very popular in British North America simply because there was no visible sign of such an organization. Besides, McGee himself claimed that there could not be more than a few Irishmen foolish enough to get involved with such a mad scheme. However, it does appear that those few were active in their allegiance to the Fenians. The Hibernian Benevolent Society had been formed in 1858 as a defense force for Catholics in Toronto after the murder of a Catholic named Sheedy during the St. Patrick's Day parade that year. Although not a

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[31] Ibid., 19 Mar. 1864.

[32] Ibid., 23 Mar. 1864.

Fenian group at first, its leader, Michael Murphy, was Head Centre of the Toronto Fenians by 1860, with a Circle of about sixty members.[33] With the support of these Fenians, Murphy was able to gain overall control over the Hibernian Society and use its events as a cover for Fenian fund-raising. It was significant that the main Fenian group in Canada was found in the Orange city of Toronto. Both organizations fed off the fear of the other among their communities. But until 1865 there was little to fear from Canadian Fenians. The organization in Ireland was almost dormant for most of these years, and the American Fenians were too busy fighting in the Civil War to bother much with British North America, other than to threaten and bluster. Murphy was able to gain the goodwill of the Catholic hierarchy and the Hibernians became a respectable force in the life of Toronto's Irish Catholic community.

Why then, was McGee so violently opposed to the Fenians? His many speeches and letters on the subject are very strongly-worded, denouncing Fenians as subversive, demonic and a threat to the Irish Catholic position both in British America and in the United States. It may well be that, after condemning the Orange Order as strongly as he did in the New Era, McGee felt obliged to do the same with what, after all, seemed to be an organization with little relevance or power in Canada and therefore of negligible political consequence. There was, in short, no obvious political danger in attacking them. The political capital to be made, however, was significant. McGee needed to expand his political base beyond the Irish

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[33]Senior, Hereward, The Fenians and Canada, (Toronto, 1978), p. 51.

community of Montreal West if he were to survive in Canadian politics, and attacking the Fenians gave him credibility with other ethnic and religious groups. Not least, perhaps, it showed how serious he was about creating a new nationality in British North America in which old feuds would have no place.

McGee was not the only Irish Catholic journalist speaking out on the Fenian issue, even though he was the earliest and most vocal. James Moylan also condemned the Irish-American group in the columns of the Canadian Freeman. In his first reference to the Fenians in March 1864, Moylan, commenting on McGee's letter to the Montreal Gazette, said:

> We are not aware that there are any Fenians in Toronto. If so, they keep the matter a profound secret. 34

A week later, he was admitting that the movement did actually exist there and was making inroads throughout Canada. He thought it was time to make some public comment on them, so he asked:

> Does the Fenian organization recommend itself to the approval of Irishmen? should it be encouraged in Canada?...All good Irishmen, at home and abroad,...return a universal negative response. 35

In condemning the Fenians, Moylan laid great stress on the fact that it was an organization which had been condemned by the Catholic hierarchy on both sides of the Atlantic. Fenianism would also be a danger to the Irish position in Canada:

> This is an association eminently calculated to beget hostile feelings between those who have hitherto lived in peace and

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[34] Canadian Freeman, (Toronto), 31 Mar. 1864.

[35] Ibid., 7 Apr. 1864.

> harmony, and that would unquestionably act to the prejudice and injury of the Irish Catholic in Canada is self-evident. 36

Following this statement with quotes from various Catholic Irish newspapers, Moylan showed that the Fenians had been condemned by all serious Irishmen. In a second article in the same issue, he turned to more immediate concerns with regard to Fenianism and echoed the thoughts of McGee on the new loyalties Irish Catholics had in Canada:

> We have all, it is to be presumed, adopted, voluntarily, this country as our home....But, once having made the choice of living here, it is every man's duty to be loyal and true to the Government of the Province....Let it [Fenianism] get a footing here, and let its members be ever so few, will it not attach to the Irish Catholic the stigma of disloyalty? Will we not - and deservedly, unless we protect against it - be considered traitors in disguise? 37

Moylan expressed the fear that Fenianism would only lead to the return of "no Irish need apply" attitudes to Canada, thereby risking all that they had gained. He then added:

> It is not our intention to question their sincerity of purpose, or to discuss the prudence or folly, the righteousness or unrighteousness, of their aims and motives. We have simply to ask, Does Fenianism commend itself to the approval of Irishmen? 38

Such was the vehemence of McGee's campaign that he took Moylan to task for not being more strict with the villains. In a letter to Moylan in October 1865, McGee lashed out against the motives, unrighteousness and folly of the Fenians:

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[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

> We have in the way the worst obstacle the devil has ever invented for the Irish, an irreligious revolutionary society in which patriotism takes the garb of indifferentism, of hostility to religion. This is the enemy of the Irish cause in our time; and it is that every man should combat, first and foremost.
>
> ...it is not honest men gone astray that we have to deal with, but dogmatic, anti-clerical demogogues, strong in their pride of opinion and eager for propagandism - a new sect, in fact, who aim at changing the heart and mind of Ireland - ie., the faith and feeling of the people - even more than its government. This sect is altogether novel in Irish history and it is not to be put down byth half-apologetic pleadings of 'good intentions'. 39

McGee probably could claim to know more about the Fenians than Moylan. Moylan had stated in April 1864 that the Hibernian Society was not a Fenian group and that ninety-nine out of a hundred Irishmen were loyal to the Government.[40] Moylan was quickly disabused about the Hibernians. In response to his claim on their behalf, the society passed a motion stating:

> While disclaiming all connection whatever with the Fenian Brotherhood, and publicly putting on record the fact ofat our being established for other and different objects to thos those said to be entertained by that body, we would nevertheless make it known that any organization having in view the independence of our Native Land shall ever enlist and will have our warmest and most heartfelt symapthies. 41

This resolution was published in the Irish Canadian, a newspaper which the Hibernian Society had established in January 1863, adding an eloquent voice to the group of Irish Catholic journalists working in British North America. The publisher of the Irish Canadian was Patrick Boyle, the

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[39] McGee to Moylan, 27 Oct. 1865, quoted in Burns, Robin, "D'Arcy McGee and the Fenians", in Harmon, Maurice, (ed), Fenians and Fenianism, (Dublin, 1968), p. 79.

[40] Canadian Freeman, 7 Apr. 1864.

[41] Irish Canadian, (Toronto), 27 Apr. 1864.

Treasurer of the Hibernian Society. The Irish Canadian was very open in treatment of Ireland's wrongs, and equally clear about what it felt the solution to be:

> We are persuaded that liberty follows only after victory, and that victory must be purchased by the sharp edge of the sword. Moral force we look upon as a mere sham to blind and deceive the people. 42

The newspaper carried advertisements for the Fenian Fair in Chicago in 1864, an event organized to raise funds for the Fenians.[43] It quoted with warm approval Michael Murphy's remarks at the St. Patrick's Day celebrations in Toronto in 1863 that "Ireland's liberty must be obtained only by blood".[44]

There was much more to the Irish Canadian and the Hibernians than this type of remark might suggest. For allied to this open support of Fenianism and armed revolution in Ireland was an equally open loyalty to Canada and its government. Boyle, like McGee and Moylan, believed that Canada offered the Irish "a fair field...to attain high and useful positions"; and he encouraged his readers, "To attain them, let us labour - let us aspire".[45] What, in fact, existed in the thinking of the Canadian Fenians was a split similar to that existing in Irish-American thought. Whereas the Irish-Americans viewed Ireland through romantic dreams of exile, while yet living in the real world of poverty, disease,

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[42] Ibid., 4 Mar. 1863.

[43] Ibid., 17 Feb. 1864.

[44] Ibid., 18 Mar. 1863.

[45] Ibid., 11 Feb. 1863.

and American xenophobia, the Canadian Irish could recognize the truth of McGee's words:

> The British flag does indeed fly here, but it casts no shadow. 46

In fact, as they saw the fruits of enlightened British rule in Canada, the Irish began to question even more strenuously the short-sightedness of British policy in Ireland. Boyle, Murphy and their companions could not see any discrepancy in being loyal to the Crown in British North America and advocating, plotting and preaching rebellion against that same Crown in Ireland. Even as they acknowledged their support for Fenianism, the Hibernians passed a resolution at the same meeting, printed beside the first in the Irish Canadian, stating:

> We yield to none in our loyalty to Canada, the free and well-governed land of our adoption. 47

This compartmentalized thinking rejected all accusations of treason as unwarranted:

> Before the charge of'treasonable utterances' can be substantiated against us, it must be shown that we have some design upon the person of our sovereign or the integrity of the Commonwealth. 48

So wrote Boyle in accusations made by the Toronto Leader and Globe after Murphy's remarks at the St. Patrick's Day events of 1863.

McGee and Moylan, unlike Boyle, believed that continuing to print

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[46] American Celt, (New York), 9 Dec. 1854.

[47] Irish Canadian, 27 Apr. 1864.

[48] Ibid., 25 Mar. 1863.

anti-British articles in Canada would only bring the cry of "Irish rebels" to the lips of the English in the Provinces. How were any other than the Irish expected to appreciate the fine distinction between loyalty to the Crown in North America and treason to the same Crown in Ireland? McGee preached an end to Irish feuds in Canada; so did Boyle and Murphy. The pages of the Irish Canadian from its earliest days called for unity among Irishmen of all classes and religions in order to make Canada a better nation. But whereas McGee believed it necessary to abandon certain provocative talk in order to create a new nationality out of the various ethnic groups, Boyle and Murphy held that the Irish in Canada ought to usettheir freedom on behalf of their homeland. When McGee spoke openly against the Fenians in 1864, Boyle turned against him in a vicious attack on "the vulger little arch-hypocrite", the "Goula of Griffintown".[49] (Goula was a Fenian term for an informer). From April of 1864 relations between the two opposing Irish Catholicsgroups deteriorated rapidly. Boyle attacked McGee and Moylan as self-appointed judges of the Irish: "the would-be Dictator to the Irishmen in Canada", as he called McGee.[50]

As Moylan tried to undercut Fenian support in Canada by pointing out the fact that the organization had been condemned by the hierarchy in Ireland and North America, he accused them of dishonesty:

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[49] Ibid., 9 Mar. 1864.

[50] Ibid., 27 Apr. 1864.

> These mouthing patriots care as little about Ireland and her destiny as they do about truth and manliness. Their sole object is to dupe as many of the unsophisticated and confiding as they possibly can, with the express view of making money out of the operation.
>
> ...Let them seriously ask, what good result has Fenianism effected for Ireland or for Irishmen, at home or abroad? What possible goood is it likely to accomplish? Has it the sanction and blessing of the Church? 51

Throughout 1865 this quarrel with Boyle continued, as the Irish Canadian tried to make light of the Church's opposition to Fenianism, always eager to print speeches and letters by nationalist bishops like Lynch of Toronto and MacHale of Tuam, in order to appear as one with constitutional nationalists.

Until the end of 1865, this could be seen as merely a division between two opposing groups of Irishmen trying to find an acceptable form for the expression of their Irishness and Canadian nationalism. Each wanted the Irish Catholics of Canada to be accepted and to be loyal to their adopted land. One group thought that could only be done by toning down the old nationalism; the other group considered such a move base treachery. But with the Fenian split of 1865, and especially after the decision by the Roberts faction in January 1866 to plan and launch an invasion of Canada, this domestic quarrel took on a very different complexion. Neither the Hibernians nor McGee had gained from the dispute. The HIbernians and Boyle had been so open in their allegiance to the Fenian cause, that no amount of loyal declarations would remove the stigma of disloyalty in the face of Fenian aggression. As for McGee, he

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51 Canadian Freeman, 3 Apr. 1865.

had been forced into such strong denunciations of revolutionary groups that he had alienated much of the Irish Catholic community in the process.

It is difficult to know whether McGee would have gone so far with his condemnation of Fenianism without Boyle's provocative articles. But once Fenianism gained a mouthpiece in Canada, McGee felt bound to oppose it. He himself had been taunted on more than one occasion by references to his part in the Young Ireland rebellion, as well as to his writings in the United States. Of all the Irish Catholics in Canada, he was the most vulnerable to any reaction against Fenian aggression. If he did not speak out, he would be branded a fellow-traveller with Fenians. He had no choice. The premise on which he acted was that Fenians were as dangerous to the Irish position as the Orangemen. But whatever his own motives, Boyle's newspaper drove him to ever more violent condemnations of the Fenian form of Irish nationalism. The effects were not always what he intended. Boyle published a letter in the Irish Canadian in April 1864 written by a Catholic who might naturally have been a McGee supporter. He expressed McGee's fault accurately:

> I don't deny that there is much truth in what Mr. McGee has lately written against the Fenians in Canada; but the tone of authority over us which Mr. McGee assumes in his writings, and the paternal air which he adopts,... are felt as very insulting by many who quite agree with him in his estimate of Fenianism. 52

As a Minister of the Government of Canada, as well as an intimate with many Irish nationalists in the United States, McGee had sources of information on the Fenians that other writers lacked. In addition, he

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52 Irish Canadian, 20 Apr. 1864.

was the only Irish Catholic journalist in British North America who had actually been a rebel. He knew many of the Fenians personally and had been involved with that school of Irish nationalism since 1846. To him, the Fenians were just another name for the republicans he had come in conflict with in the United States from 1849. But his inside knowledge was expressed in what was seen to be an insulting, patronizing manner that only served to alienate the very people he sought to reach. He well recognized that the Irish are easily attracted to emotional appeals to nationalism. The language of the Fenians was designed to trigger a very Irish response: emotional, romantic and irrational. McGee's mistake was that he appealed to the rational side of the Irish; he tried to make them see what they did not want to see. It may be said that he forgot that the Irish are easily led, but very hard to drive. This was something Boyle understood, and he was always careful to pay lip service to popular figures in the Irish nationalist pantheon. In spite of his dismissal of moral force as a "sham", he was careful to praise the memory of O'Connell and the Grattan era.

In the summer of 1865 McGee made what was probably the biggest mistake of his career. While visiting Ireland as a Canadian representative at an Exhibition in Dublin, he travelled to his home town of Wexford and gave a talk on his "Twenty Years in North America". He was determined to strike a ringing blow against Fenianism and everything it stood for; and in his attempt he managed to alienate almost every section of Irish nationalists, both at home and abroad. He began by stating his views on

his Young Ireland days:

> I am not ashamed of Young Ireland - why should I be? Politically we were a pack of fools, but we were honest in our folly, and no man need blush at forty for the follies of one-and-twenty, unless, indeed, he still perseveres in them. 53

Then, to distance Young Ireland from the Fenians, he continued:

> Some...seem to think that as I was a Young Irelander some twenty years ago I ought to show some leniency for them. Why, Young Ireland, as I am free to say, was politically a folly, but the men were honest and manly. Men like Thomas Davis and Duffy and others still living would have scorned to range themselves with these Punch and Judy Jacobins whose sole scheme of action seems to be to get their heads broken. 54

During the speech McGee also condemned the lifestyle forced on the Irish immigrants in the United States and spoke truthfully and forcefully about the dishonesty and immorality common among the poorer sections of the Irish in the cities of the east coast. It was a devastatingly honest speech, one which McGee had written out in advance, contrary to his usual style, in order not to be carried away by his emotions. He wanted it to be a calm, reasoned and fair statement of facts which he believed the Irish needed to hear. But once again he failed to realize that what the Irish needed to hear and what they wanted to hear were two different things.. McGee had done the unforgiveable: he had made the Irish face up to the truth and pulled down their hallowed myths. By 1865 Young Ireland's rebellion was a myth in the history of Irish nationalism: McGee called them fools. Irrelevant that he had been one and ought to know;

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[53] Canadian Freeman, 7 June 1865.

[54] Ibid.

it was unpalatable, therefore wrong. The United States as a refuge for poor Irish exiles, the land of opportunity, equal rights and freedom was also a myth. McGee spoke of anti-Catholic nativism, crooked Irish-American political bosses, and Irish girls forced into prostitution. It was all true, but what did that matter? His friends of Young Ireland were angry and turned against him, even though many of them, too, would come to the same conclusions in their turn. His crime was that he expressed his views loudly and publicly.

It was not until he returned to Canada that McGee realized how seriously his position had been jeopardized by the Wexford speech. Boyle naturally condemned him strongly; but the fact that even Moylan was not solidly behind him on this issue was a real shock. Moylan was undoubtedly embarrassed by the speech, since he was so closely associated with McGee. Boyle had even taunted him about McGee's influence on the Canadian Freeman in 1864:

> What property we possess is our own and no member of parliament holds a mortgage on it. 55

Although Moylan defended McGee's comments on the Fenians and the Irish in the United States, he distanced himself from McGee's remarks about Young Ireland, printing an editorial from the Dublin Nation, the former Young Ireland journal. The Nation praised McGee for his oratory and for his courage. They even agreed with his opinion of the 1848 fiasco:

> [The leaders of 1848] refer to it as a disastrous error into which they were swept by that surge of popular excitement, which, rising at Paris, spread through Europe,

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55 Irish Canadian, 7 Sep. 1864.

> and momentarily bore away the strongest minds with irresistible force. 56

This was what McGee wanted to warn against in Wexford: that excitement that bore away the strongest minds which he saw manifested in Fenianism. But, as the Nation pointed out, he had not made that clear:

> Nevertheless we take exception to Mr. McGee's references to the politics of the Young Ireland Party...not so much for what he does say, as for what he does not say, while touching on the subject at all, do we take objection....To confess or condemn folly may be highly praiseworthy; but not to define more clearly the limits to which such condemnation was meant to reach, is, in the present case, to abandon to aspersion, if not, indeed, indirectly to cast aspersion upon the noble principles...and useful labours of the 'Young Ireland Party'.57

That illustrated McGee's predicament. To remain loyal to his new nation, he had to condemn publicly the Fenian threat. But to qualify that in the way the Nation, and Moylan, required, would be to risk giving legitimacy to Fenian propaganda about British "tyranny" in Ireland. Trying to walk that thin line, McGee fell foul of both sides, republicans and constitutionalists alike. He seemed to be condemning all Irish nationalists in one stroke. It was a dangerous mistake; but one made in all honesty in an attempt to clarify the divided loyalties of Irish Canadians. Of course, he was right in what he said, but he could have been more sensitive. Surely McGee of all men should have realized how little the Irish appreciate having the truth told to them about their heroes and their martyrdom?

In October 1865, the authorities in Ireland moved against the

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[56] Canadian Freeman, 7 June, 1865.

[57] Ibid.

Fenians, arresting the leadership and effectively ending any hope of a rebellion there for some time. Although Stephens escaped rather quickly, Moylan felt justified to write, "the bubble is beginning to burst".[58] Almost immediately, Moylan and McGee started writing articles and making speeches calling for an amelioration of conditions in Ireland. Moylan referred to British policy in Ireland as "blind and infatuated".[59] Speaking at a dinner held in his honour in November, McGee also called on Britain to deal fairly and justly with Ireland. The dinner was an attempt to restore his prestige among the Irish Catholic community, and was attended by Macdonald and Cartier, and other leading lights of Canadian politics and society. Once again, McGee lampooned the Fenians:

> They liberate Ireland! Why don't they liberate the Ireland at their own doors, from the poisonous and murderous surroundings of the tenement houses of New York and Boston?

He tried to explain why he said what he did in Wexford:

> I thought it necessary to show my countrymen the reverse of the American medal always glistening before their eyes. 60

McGee had been thrown off his stride by the reaction to his speech at Wexford, and by the end of 1865 he was trying to restore some of his former credibility with his Irish Catholic constituency in Canada. But Boyle was in no position to benefit from McGee's discomfort. He, too, ended the year in an uncomfortable position, caught by surprise by the threatened Fenian invasion of Canada. To add to his discomfort, the

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[58] Ibid., 5 Oct. 1865.

[59] Ibid., 12 Oct. 1865.

[60] Ibid., 23 Nov. 1865.

Hibernians had taken part in a show of strength in November 1865 that was primarily designed to show the organization and discipline of the society. On Guy Fawkes night, November 5, there were rumours that the Orangemen were going to burn O'Connell in effigy. That evening, the Hibernians gathered in front of Queen's Park in Toronto. Then, while a group remained there, the rest divided into sections and marched away to the four corners of the city. A number of shots were fired, then all was still; the Hibernians had dispersed. There was no violence or riot, but the very efficiency with which the drill was carried out struck fear and suspicion in the minds of the Protestant population.

As 1866 dawned, Boyle was left with the dilemma of repudiating any move against Canada as a loyal Canadian citizen, after encouraging and abetting for years the very men who were now threatening his adopted land. Divided loyalties began to catch up with the Hibernians. D'Arcy McGee, and to a lesser extent James Moylan, were also caught in divided loyalties. They had tried so hard to educate the Irish Catholics in their duties to the new nationality that they had alienated many, angered more, and had lost a great deal of credibility among their natural constituency. In many ways, their disagreements had been more about the speed at which the Irish should become Canadians; there was no doubt about the desirability of the process. The question they had to answer was: how much of the Irish can Irish-Canadians retain and for how long? How much Irish nationalism is compatible with a developing Canadian nationality? Can loyalty to the British Crown in Canada be allowed co-exist with

advocating treason against that same Crown in Ireland, where the situation is entirely different? The questions were answered differently by both sides, but each was trying honestly to do what was right for the future of the Irish in Canada, their adopted land. It might have resolved itself in time, but time had run out. The events of 1866 should have united Boyle and McGee against a common threat, but by then the bitterness and suspicion built up since 1864 made that practically impossible.

III. Anglin and the Fenians.

In New Brunswick, Timothy Anglin realized from the beginning, as McGee did not, how dangerous it was for an Irish public figure to be seen speaking out against Irish nationalists. His problem was essentially the same as that of his Canadian rival: if he did not appear to condemn the Fenians, he would risk being branded a sympathiser. As his biographer admits:

> Whatever position he took, discussion of Fenianism could only hurt him politically, and he undoubtedly felt that on this issue silence was the better part of valour. 61

Neither silence, nor clear statements of principle would be of use to

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[61]Baker, p. 90.

him, and might even harm his standing in the Province. As far as he could, Anglin declined comment on Fenianism, and where it was necessary, he tried to play both sides at once. He tried to distance himself from the Fenians' methods while approving their motives and aims. He showed this equivocal position as early as 1863:

> Revolution is always a fearful, often a wicked thing, and the views of these Fenians may be visionary, their hopes may be baseless; some may think their intentions wicked and their schemes rash and wild; but those who approved of revolution in Tuscany and Parma must at least admit that the grievances which the Fenians would redress are unparalleled in their enormity, even if the means by which they would redress them should not meet with approval. 62

Anglin generally ignored the Fenians until other St. John newspapers raiseddthe rumour of Fenian activities in New Brunswick early in 1865. He stated then in the Morning Freeman:

> We are satisfied that no such body exists here, and that no attempt has been made to establish such a body. When we have any reason to apprehend that any such attempt may be made, we will not hesitate to say what we think of it in very plain and unmistakeable language. 63

But, in fact, Anglin avoided ever saying exactly what he thought of the Fenians. Instead, he refused to add any comment to reports of Fenian events. He reportedtthe Convention in Philadelphia, when Roberts and Sweeny began to take charge, without any comment, either for or against them.[64] He reprinted an article on Stephens without comment, although the article certainly made Stephens out to be quite a romantic and

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[62] Morning Freeman, 21 Nov. 1863.

[63] Ibid., 7, 14 Jan. 1865.

[64] Ibid., 28 Oct. 1865.

mysterious figure.[65]

Anglin was to pay for this ambivalence towards the Fenians. When Fisher stood as candidate in York in November 1865, he centred his campaign, not on Confederation, but on Anglin. Using the Fenians as an issue for the first time, Fisher accused Anglin of being in sympathy with them, and therefore condemned the government of which Anglin was a member. It was a nasty ploy to identify Fenianism and Catholicism, and Anglin, as the Irish Catholic leader in the Province, of being in league with the organization.

> The reckoning day is at hand, Monday next will decide whether Mr. Anglin is to rule this Province, or this Province to rule Mr. Anglin; whether loyalty or Fenianism is the chief power in the land. 66

It was an unfair and scurrilous attack, typical of the tactics Fisher used in politics, but it worked. In spite of Anglin's declaration that "Confederation, and only Confederation, is the issue", the loyalty cry was effective and Fisher won the seat. Anglin even had to deal with a forged cheque made out to "H.C.T.W.Anglin which surfaced during the campaign. Anglin accused the Confederates of trying to make out that he was Head Centre (H.C.) of a Fenian circle in St. John.[67] But it is true that he had left himself open to such attacks by his refusal to unequivocally condemn Fenianism, either in the United States, or in

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[65] Ibid., 21 Oct. 1865.

[66] Reporter, (Fredericton), 3 Nov. 1865.

[67] Morning Freeman, 25 Nov. 1865.

British North America. The great supporter of the Imperial link was being denounced as a Fenian! As in the case of Boyle and McGee, this could have remained a local issue, part of the petty politicking in New Brunswick. Unfortunately for Anglin, and the anti-Confederates with whom he was identified, 1866 was to make Fenianism the central issue in the Confederation scheme.

Lieutenant-Governor Gordon was determined to use the internal divisions in the Smith Government to bring about a change in their attitude to Confederation. In February, Smith himself went to Washington to try and salvage something from the Reciprocity Treaty, but he had no success there. Under pressure of events, Smith negotiated with Gordon and agreed to include a passage in the Speech from the Throne favouring the scheme of Federation adopted at Quebec. This was done in March 1866, but debate on the Speech drifted leisurely for five weeks, as neither side wanted to bring the matter to a head. Smith was no true convert to Confederation, and Tilley had no intention of allowing Smith be the one to bring Confederation to New Brunswick. Gordon was losing patience with all, and arranged with his Legislative Council to receive a motion from them favouring the Quebec scheme. Smith was in a quandary. As the official advisors to Gordon, his government had recommended forwarding the motion for more consideration in London. By refusing to follow that advice, the Lieutenant-Governor had given Smith little choice but either to accept his actions, and the motion, or else to resign. After rejecting Gordon's helpful advice that he resign immediately, Smith had second thoughts and

formally resigned on April 10, 1866.[68]

Anglin was predictably furious. From early February, he had been warning the Governor in careful statements in the Morning Freeman that any action on Gordon's part to bring down the Smith Government would be unconstitutional.[69] When word leaked out that Gordon had decided to include the passage favouring Federation in the Throne Speech, Anglin claimed that it was a vicious rumour:

> If their statement is true, the conduct of the Government [sic] must atvonce have been the most extraordinary and unconstitutional ever known in this Province, for he must have caballed with the leaders or some members of the opposition. 70

Of course, this is exactly what Gordon had done. When it seemed likely that Gordon would press the issue, Anglin privately threatened to expose him publicly:

> Should a break-up take place we must at all events be able to tell the whole story so the public may understand all about it and how we are hampered and thwarted by His Excellancy under the guise of friendship.

Anglin promised to "skin him as I never yet skinned recreant and deceiver",[71] while in a letter to Gordon he made more polite threats:

> I hope most sincerely that when an election does occur no party will have any cause or even plausible pretext for dragging your name before the public, and discussing your conduct or your motives. 72

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[68]MacNutt, p. 446-7.

[69]Morning Freeman, 8 Feb. 1866.

[70]Ibid., 13 Feb. 1866.

[71]Anglin to Gilmour, 10 Feb. 1866, quoted in Baker, p. 100.

[72]Anglin to Gordon, ibid.

When Gordon went ahead with his scheme and precipitated Smith's resignation, Anglin announced it in the Freeman as a major constitutional crisis:

> Extraordinary Conduct of the Governor!!!
> The Government About to Resign.
> The Liberties of the People at Stake.
> Responsible Government Overthrown!!! 73

He was vehement in his denunciation of Gordon's actions and saw them as a threat to the independence of New Brunswick, his constant concern:

> [Gordon's action] was, at all events, an act of gross despotism; of arbitrary power, to which no people who love, and who deserve freedom, can possibly submit. At one blow, Responsible Government was overthrown, the liberties of the people were destroyed, the independence of the Province was shattered. 74

Anglin had no doubt that Gordon had been "acting under directions from Downing Street".[75] He had long come to see Cardwell as "a tool of the Canadians", and even went so far as to make a distinction between the evil designs of Her Majesty's Government and Her Majesty's personal wishes, no doubt in order to remain loyal to something of the Empire.[76] The Tilley group, both in the Assembly and in the election campaign now beginning, were known in the pages of the Freeman as the "Canadian Imperialist Party".[77] Anglin tried to defend himself against charges of disloyalty leveled at him during the Fisher campaign.[78] This was essential

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[73] Morning Freeman, 10 Apr. 1866.

[74] Ibid., 12 Apr. 1866.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid., 14 Apr. 1866.

[78] Ibid., 12 Apr. 1866.

if he were to have any chance of being re-elected for St. John. It was also about time he cleared the air on the subject: the Confederates had been very effective at portraying him as a Fenian sympathizer, and the Irish Catholics of the Province as secret Fenians to a man. It was up to Anglin to defend them against such attacks. Even Gordon had been able to assure Cardwell that the Irish of New Brunswick were almost totally loyal, but until their representative spoke out clearly and unequivocally on the issue, the suspicions would remain unchallenged. Unfortunately, Anglin could not bring himself to condemn the Fenians in the terms required by the situation. In a speech to the Assembly, he gave his equivalent to McGee's Wexford speech, trying to explain his involvement in Young Ireland and distance himself from the Fenians. Unlike McGee, though, he did not change his mind about the validity of Young Ireland's rebellion:

> He believed the Fenians were a mad and reckless body of men, who did not know what they were about, and with them he had no sympathy; but in regard to the movements of 1847-48, he said he could scarcely speak impartially without strong feelings.

Anglin spoke emotionally about the suffering, starvation and death he had witnessed in Ireland during the Famine years; how he had seen old and young, men, women and children die:

> He would be less than a man and an Irishman, to speak harshly of the men who took steps which they believed would remedy this state of things. The Fenian party knew little or nothing of these things, and could not remedy them, if they now existed. 79

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[79] Ibid., 12 Apr. 1866.

It was reported that Anglin was overcome with emotion during this part of his speech, but he still failed in his main purpose. Some were confused about whether he had refused to speak harshly of Young Ireland or the Fenians. He had still not condemned the latter outright, merely said he had no sympathy for them, and that left him open to the charge of disloyalty. McGee had realized that a new nationality required a break with the old; Anglin was not prepared to abandon the defense of the Young Ireland days.

Time had run out for clarifying issues. In early April, the long-feared Fenian invasion seemed certain. In the first weeks of April, Fenians from various parts of the United States congregated in Eastport, Calais, and other towns on the New Brunswick border with Maine. They were led by Bernard Doran Killian, Treasurer of the O'Mahony Fenians, and one-time associate of Thomas D'Arcy McGee during the latter's days in American journalism. The Fenians marched and made speeches, obviously preparing to cross the river into New Brunswick at the first opportunity. They flourished guns and knives and indulged in wild rhetoric about Ireland and her freedom. They also made speeches about Confederation and how they were going to save the Provinces from having British schemes forced upon them.

Killian made himself highly visible, giving speeches, visiting his "troops" at different points along the frontier. There was near-panic in the towns across the river in New Brunswick as the people lived in hourly fear of attack and slaughter. Commercial life along the St. Croix

river was brought to a total stop.[80] Gordon, who had been warning Cardwell about exactly such an event months before[81], quickly organized the militia and called on the military authorities in Halifax to send ships to patrol the St. Croix and prevent crossings. But other than capturing a British flag at gunpoint in a night raid on the island of Campobello, the Fenians kept to the right side of the border and confined themselves to speeches and marches. When the American Government sent General Meade to protect their side of the river, the Fenian "raid" came to an end, and by early May almost all of the Fenians had returned home.[82] The feared Fenian invasion was something of a damp squib.

The impact of that damp squib was much greater than the event. Fenians had actually threatened British North American territory, and the accusations of disloyalty leveled against the Irish Catholics in general and Anglin in particular, gained added force. When it was learned that the Fenians had spoken out against Confederation, Tilley could claim that a vote for Confederation was a vote against Fenianism and disloyalty, and vice versa. Anglin was undoubtedly on the spot and he replied with the most amazing accusation of the campaign: he accused D'Arcy McGee of being behind the Fenian raid and blamed the Canadians for the entire event. It was an attempt on his part to shift the stigma of disloyalty away from himself and his party and implicate McGee and

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[80] MacNutt, p. 449.

[81] Davis, M.A., "The Fenian Invasion of New Brunswick", Canadian Historical Review, 1955, p. 318-21.

[82] Ibid., p. 331.

and the Canadians instead. Both sides were attempting to use the cry of loyalty for their own purposes: Anglin declaring that Gordon and the pro-Confederation party had destroyed responsible government and the independence of New Brunswick; while Smith and his party were to be seen as the true patriots fighting the tyranny of Canadian Imperialism. Tilley, on the other hand, was trying to identify Anglin, and therefore the anti-Confederation cause, with Fenianism and disloyalty. The raid at Eastport seemed a highly fortuitous event for the Tilley campaign.

Anglin believed the entire sequence of events was too much of a coincidence to be believeable. On April 21, he reported on the haphazard manner in which the Fenians were acting. It seemed to him that if the Fenians were seriously thinking of invading, they would hardly go about it so openly. He decided that, in fact, the Fenians had no intention of invading New Brunswick and that their purpose was very different indeed:

> After looking at all these circumstances, and the remarkable fact that these parties appear on the frontier just when the Governor is preparing for his coup d'etat, read what, according to the Journal, Mr. Killian said at Eastport:-
>
> 'The Fenian Brotherhood saw that the British Government would force Confederation on the Provinces, and the Fenians won't let them force it on them. The Fenian Brotherhood will stand with people against their ministers.'...
>
> If Mr. Killian were in the pay of the Canadians, and Mr. McGee himself wrote his speech for him, he could not have said anything better suited to the purposes of the Canadian party....the Canadian party obviously believe that Mr. Killian's nonsense will help them and their cause amazingly. ...the conclusion is irresistible that Mr. Killian is doing the work of the Canadian party, and in all probability with a full knowledge of what he is doing. 83

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[83] Morning Freeman, 21 Apr. 1866.

What made the Fenian activities even more suspicious was that they were not members of the Roberts faction:

> The movements of the Fenians on our frontier are quite inexplicable. The O'Mahony Fenians repudiated the idea of invading the Provinces, and ridiculed the proposition made by General Sweeny; yet we find that the small bands now collected at Eastport belong to that faction and that they are under the immediate control of the redoubtable B.D. Killian himself, once an intimate friend of the Hon. T.D. McGee and his associate in the management of the American Celt, a rabid anti-British journal, now the right-hand man of O'Mahony and some time ago accused of furnishing information to the Canadian Government for a consideration. 84

This seems to have been a desperate attempt by Anglin to escape from the fruits of his ambivalence of the past three years.

Relations between McGee and Anglin had been poor since McGee's speech in St. John in 1863. His Wexford speech further alienated Anglin who resented any attack on the Irish anywhere. Their opposition on the Confederation question simply confirmed a previously cold relationship. But this dispute was an attack on the very integrity of McGee. Should Anglin's charge be found valid, then McGee's entire career in Canadian politics, as well as his new nationality hopes, would be discredited forever. The charge was too serious for McGee to ignore, and when Anglin again published the accusation that McGee was behind the Eastport raid in a June issue of the Freeman, McGee responded with a strongly worded letter. But rather than settling the issue, McGee's self-defense only confused matters further. He denied that Killian had been his business partner on the American Celt, which was rather a pedantic point since

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[84] Ibid.

Killian had been his associate on the paper and McGee had left it to him when he moved to Canada. McGee then denied that Killian was still his partner, which was impossible to prove one way or the other. Then McGee did something totally strange: he denied that he had left Ireland with a price on his head.[85] Anglin had not raised this issue at all, so why did McGee? And, having raised it, why did he deny something, the source for which was a letter he himself had published immediately after arriving in the United States in 1848? He had said that he had seen a wanted poster with his name and description on it, offering a reward for his capture, in 1848 before he left Ireland.

Anglin's questions were worth finding answers to. Why did the anti-Canadian invasion faction of the Fenians launch an attack on New Brunswick? Why were they so obvious in their preparations, thereby ensuring the authorities had time to prevent their success? What explanation was there for the timing of the raid and the presence of Bernard Killian at their head, speaking in a way that was bound to help rather than hinder Confederation in New Brunswick? No doubt Anglin would have pursued the matter further had he known that O'Mahony later dismissed Killian as Treasurer of the Fenians "for disobedience to orders, and for inaugurating movements calculated to injure and defeat the Brotherhood".[86] An informer called O'Donnell, working for the Canadian Government, infiltrated the O'Mahony group and reported after the Campobello fiasco:

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[85] Ibid., 12 June, 1866.

[86] Irish Canadian, 16 May, 1866.

> O'Mahony...has consequently become very dispirited... on account of Killian's doings. Indeed he suspects Killian to be secretly in league with Mr. D'Arcy McGee. 87

The Boston Pilot, a Fenian sympathizer, reported in May that:

> Leading politicians in Montreal are of the opinion that Mr. Killian and Mr. D'Arcy McGee have formed an alliance for the benefit of each other, and that the movement at Eastport is intended to further the provincial confederation schement 88

Anglin was obviously not alone in his suspicions. There is no concrete evidence to link McGee to Killian and the Eastport raid; but a closer investigations of McGee's movements does give room for doubt. In 1859, after his election as M.P. for Montreal West, McGee travelled from Boston to Washington, D.C. in the company of James Stephens. Stephens was in the United States trying to raise money for the new organization he had founded. There is no mention of this journey in any biography of McGee, and the source for this information, Stephen's diary, simply says that he was on business in Washington.[89] McGee gave Stephens some money and apologized that he had no more to give for a cause "he so deeply sympathized with".[90] McGee had often hinted, as in the Wexford speech for example, that he had contact with high-ranking Fenians, although he never mentioned Killian by name. However, if, as Anglin claimed, Killian had been offering information to the Canadian Government, then McGee

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[87] D'Arcy, W., The Fenian Movement in the United States, (Washington, 1947), p. 141. Edward Archibald, British Consul at New York to Viscount Monke, April 17, 1866.

[88] Boston Pilot, 5 May, 1866.

[89] Ryan, p. 119.

[90] Ibid., p. 126.

would certainly have known about it. James Moylan published an article from a U.S. newspaper in June 1866 referring to Killian as "that shrewd pupil of D'Arcy McGee".[91] Finally, during the trial of James Whelan for the murder of McGee, an important prosecution witness claimed he heard Whelan threaten McGee, saying:

> [Whelan] called McGee a traitor. 'McGee got money from the Fenians', Whelan said, 'and the bloody old pig turned the money over to Protestants.' 92

A reading of McGee's condemnations of the Fenians from 1863 leaves no doubt as to his sincerity. He recognized how attractive such a movement could be to Irish nationalist feeling in British America, and that it could only lead to problems for the Irish. For their sake, and for the sake of the new nationality he campaigned for, the Irish had to learn to leave their aggressive form of nationalism behind them. But the evidence for his involvement in the Eastport raid, though circumstantial, is impressive. As early as November 1865, during the crucial Fisher election in York, McGee had sent word to Gordon that St. John would require watching owing to the Fenians.[93] What did he know then? Both Anglin and O'Mahony suspected that Killian was working secretly with McGee on the raid in order to further the Confederation cause in New Brunswick, which it undoubtedly did. Perhaps it may seem incredible that McGee should be in

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[91] Canadian Freeman, 7 June, 1866.

[92] Slattery, T.P., They Got To Find Mee Guilty Yet, (Toronto, 1972), p.142.

[93] Davis, p. 318.

league with the Fenians at all, but two points are worth noting here. By April 1866, McGee did not consider the Roberts wing of Fenianisn to be a real threat to the Irish in Canada. Because that wing threatened to invade their adopted country, they had little popular support among Irish Catholics of the Provinces. But the O'Mahony faction hadmmaintained the affection, if not loyalty, of that community, since they had remained committed to an attack on Britain. So what were they doing at Eastport? If McGee had arranged the raid with Killian, he managed to kill two birds with one stone: push New Brunswick into Confederation on the grounds of loyalty; and discredit the O'Mahony wing of the Fenians in the eyes of Irish Catholics in British America, who would not support an attack on their adopted homeland. There is no doubt that McGee would have gained greatly from such an event. At this point, another character comes into the picture. Such a plan as Anglin accused McGee of concocting would have to have the support of the man who dealt directly with Fenian informers in Canada, a man who would be quite capable of using such "auxiliaries" as the Fenians - John A. Macdonald. It is interesting to note that his name, too, was mentioned in connection with the Killian-McGee conspiracy.[94]

There is, of course, no way of proving, or disproving, such a theory. McGee's personal papers might have contained some hints on the matter, but they disappeared after his death, whenhhis family was dispersed. Their absence only adds to the mystery. Anglin himself, however, was not beyond promulgating the conspiracy story against McGee in order to save

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[94] Ibid., p. 333.

himself from public attack. We have already noted that his accusations against McGee were designed to shift the charge of disloyalty to the supporters of Confederation and away from himself. He had good reason to do so, since Killian's second-in-comman at Eastport, Patrick Sinnott, was said to have been related by marriage to Anglin himself, as was John Warren, another of Killian's lieutenants.[95] D'Arcy McGee was a logical choice for Anglin to blame, since he had been a bone fide rebel and had been associated with many of the Fenians during his days in the United States. Anglin may once have admired McGee as a Young Irelander, but by 1866 his attitude had hardened considerably. During the election campaign of 1866, Anglin constantly referred to McGee's statement of November 1865 that, in achieving Confederation, Canada was on "the very threshold of independence".[96] Anglin used this to warn against "what Confederation would really mean for New Brunswick".[97] He ridiculed McGee's idea of a Canadian monarch and nobilitybbased on the English model, with an English Prince reigning over the new nation he dreamed of.[98] Anglin claimed that McGee was trying to cgrasp positions far above his station. His attitude to his Canadian rival was well expressed in an article of June 1866:

> While we all admire the great talents he is ever so ready to prostitute, neither friend nor foe respects him. 99

By the time he wrote those bitter words, Anglin knew that Confederation, the great enemy of New Brunswick nationalism, was to come into effect.

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[95] Ibid., p. 324.

[96] Morning Freeman, 25 Jan. 1866.

[97] Ibid.,

[98] Ibid., 10 Feb. 1866.

[99] Ibid., 26 June, 1866.

The General Election of 1866 did not go well for Anglin and his party. The pro-Confederation party concentrated on the idea of getting better terms than were given in the Quebec Resolutions, thus robbing the opponents of the scheme of anything to attack. No-one was defending the Quebec terms, so the Smith government were unable to use it as an issue. The government's economic policy had been destroyed by the end of the Reciprocity Treaty, leaving no alternative to economic reciprocity among the British Provinces, which was only available through Confederation. When Cardwell's instructions to Gordon of June 1865 were published, and loyalty was a major issue was won by the pro-Confederation party, since it was clear from them that the Imperial Government favoured Confederation. Thus, the opponents of the scheme were cast in the unhappy role of the supporters of annexation, the only viable alternative to Confederation. All they had left to fight on was the unconstitutional action of Gordon in April 1866. This, of course, suited Anglin perfectly. All along, he had made the independence of New Brunswick the main plank in his stand against Confederation. It was his sense of New Brunswick nationality that inspired his efforts. The actions of Gordon and Tilley had left him convinced that the only true loyalists in the Province were those who fought and protested this attempt to destroy the legislative independence of responsible government. His entire campaign was based on the premise that Confederation was a plot by Canadians, British officials like Gordon and Cardwell, and the "Canadian Imperialist" party in New Brunswick, to cut the Imperial link with Britain and destroy responsible government in

that Province:

> The late outrage on the principles of Responsible Government is so gross and so flagrant that the back stairs Imperialists and their organs, after a vain but desperate effort to defend the conduct of the Governor and his illegitimate advisers, have abandoned this ground as utterly untenable. 100

Gordon was again described as a "mere tool of Downing Street", and the role assigned to the Fenians by Anglin was emphasized constantly. In April, when the scare at Campobello was over, Anglin wondered:

> The Fenians have left the frontier as queerly as they came. What will the Confederates and foes of Responsible Government do without their good allies? How did it happen that they did not keep them there until after the elections? 101

Nevertheless, warned Anglin, watch and see: when the election takes place the Fenians will return at just the right time. As it happened, the Fenian invasion of Canada did take place during the New Brunswick elections, and Anglin was quick to point out the "coincidence".[102] He launched a strong attack against the loyalty of the supporters of Confederation in Canada. Cartier was branded a rebel for his role in 1837; McGee was labeled the same for 1848; and Galt was condemned for his one-time support of Annexation. Anglin declared righteously:

> And the men who follow these leaders...have the impudence to denounce as disloyal, etc., the men who would save these Provinces, save their constitution, save their liberties, save their revenues from the clutch of such rulers. 103

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[100] Ibid., 3 May 1866.

[101] Ibid., 28 Apr. 1866.

[102] Ibid., June 1866.

[103] Ibid., 12 May 1866.

The anti-Confederation party became the Constitutionalists in the Freeman.[104] Anglin's cry was an appeal to the nationalism of New Brunswick, against the concept of a new nationality in Confederation; but it was a sincere declaration of loyalty:

> At present New Brunswick knows her position; her people are free Antis - they will remain free; they know their rights, and they will guard them;....She will be the subjects of England ever, but never the serfs of Canada. 105

But it was not enough. In the middle of the campaign, Anglin was faced with a formidable opponent when Bishop Rogers of Chatham wrote a public letter supporting Confederation. Not only did this reduce Anglin's influence on Irish Catholics, it led to a personal attack on his ideas and methods by Rogers. Throughout May 1866, Rogers continued to publicly condemn Anglin by name for his treatment of Gordon and for his opposition to Confederation.[106] Anglin riposted angrily, claiming that Roger's political views were not infallible: "twaddle is twaddle even if written by a Bishop".[107] In his response to Rogers, Anglin was consistent in demanding freedom for his fellow Catholics. He wrote to Rogers:

> I repel and repudiate your monstrous assumption of the power to decide for Catholics in your diocese how they should vote on political subjects, and - I assert the rights of myself and my fellow-countrymen to perfect equality with their Protestant fellow-subjects on the political platform; their absolute right to think and judge for themselves on all political matters. 108

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[104] Ibid., 15 May 1866.

[105] Ibid., 24 May 1866.

[106] Ibid., 22, 26 May 1866.

[107] Ibid., 29 May 1866.

[108] Ibid., 31 May 1866.

Such a dispute could not help Anglin's chances of re-election among St. John Catholics,,and in the electoral debacle suffered by his party, he was among those who lost their seats. He was not alone; his party could win only eight seats in the new Assembly, almost all through the solidly anti-Confederation vote of the Acadian Catholics of the Province.[109] All Anglin could say in response to such defeat was:

> The people, by a majority of their votes, have declared that they prefer to be treated as slaves and dupes. 110

The coming of Confederation was almost inevitable after the election. In the year following, Anglin kept up a half-hearted campaign against Tilley and the Confederates, showing how their electoral promises were not being kept. But he recognized the reality of defeat and accepted it reluctantly.

After Gordon's "coup d'état" in April 1866, the Canadians knew that an electoral win for Tilley was almost a certainty. Along with the necessary funds required in any New Brunswick election, Macdonald made sure that Tilley and Gray had everything needed for victory. Well might Anglin ruefully declare:

> It was Fenianism and gold that carried all the elections won by the Canadian party. 111

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[109] MacNutt, p. 453.

[110] Morning Freeman, 14 June 1866.

[111] Ibid.,

IV. The Fenians in Canada

Fenianism has been an important factor in bringing about a pro-Confederation ascendancy in New Brunswick; but it had been done at the cost of great internal divisions in the Province. The Irish Catholics had been singled out as disloyal and possibly even treacherous in their links with the Fenians, however unfairly. Fenianism was to be the most dominating feature of Canadian life in 1866 also. Whatever may have been their involvement in the Eastport affair, McGee and Macdonald feared a similar raid on Canadian territory. McGee in particular saw such a possibility as the one great threat to his plan for a new nationality embracing all ethnic and religious groups in the country. The passing of the Quebec Resolutions in the Canadian Parliament was accomplished in spite of George Brown's resignation from the Cabinet early in 1866. Only the rumours reaching McGee of a possible Fenian raid on Canada in co-operation with Canadian Fenians remained to cloud McGee's thoughts by the summer of that year. This was a real threat to everything he had worked for since coming to Canada in 1857. Even after the Quebec Conference, he had not rested on his laurels, but continued to speak and write on the issue of theenew nationality and its implications for British North America. He was a tireless prophet, encouraging, instructing and enlightening Canadians and Maritimers on the prospects Confederation brought within reach:

> I have been blamed for using the phrase - 'creating a new nation in the North'....I believed then, and still believe, that we want an inspiration beyond thealocal sectional and sectarian feelings that divided and yet

> separate us. I believe that...the only way to enlarge its views and liberalize them, was to show the people there was a great future in store for the inhabitants of all British North America. 112

He spoke to the fears of the French Canadians who would be a minority in the new Parliament after holding a central place in the making of governments since 1841:

> I will remind them, I hope not improperly, that every one of the colonies we now propose to reunite under one rule - in which they shall have a potential voice - were once before united as New France....Well, gentlemen of French origin, we propose to restore these long-lost compatriots [the French of New Brunswick] to your protection. 113

But it was to Fenianism that McGee devoted most of his eloquence during 1866. This year was to be the climax of his campaign to discourage the Irish Catholics of Canada from involving themselves with "the organization that will bring you to ruin". Nor were the Fenians unaware of his efforts. In March 1866, an informer among the Roberts Fenians reported to Macdonald:

> I slept in one room with three Senators and Congressmen every night. Their full determination is to organize immediately and make a strike for Canada. If they can arrest the Governor-General and D'Arcy McGee and other Government officers they will do it. 114

Ever since his Wexford speech, McGee had been receiving death threats in the mail, and the American Fenian press were denouncing him in the vilest terms as a Judas and traitor. Their reasons were varied, but centred on

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112 Canadian Freeman,

113 McGee speech on Confederation, Canadian Assembly, 9 Feb. 1865. In McGee, T.D., Speeches and Addresses, (London, 1865), p. 288.

114 Quoted in Slattery, T.P., The Assassination of D'Arcy McGee, (Toronto, 1968), p. 300.

the fact that McGee had been a rebel in 1848. As one of his biographers has put it:

> It was clear to his contemporaries that he had been an Irish rebel, a republican and a revolutionary,...the charge of treason to the Irish republic would be made against McGee. 115

But, it should be repeated, McGee, though technically a rebel in 1848, was never a republican, nor a revolutionary, aside from that short period of bitter disillusionment in the United States in late 1848. As for the "Irish republic", in 1866 it simply did not exist outsideoof Fenian headquarters in New York, and the imaginings of exiled Irish dreamers. McGee was no traitor to Ireland or the Irish, certainly not in the way the Fenians implied. He was of the moderate wing of Young Ireland and only entered into rebellion when he felt forced to it by the actions of the British Government. He wasoalso impelled by the strong currents of emotion and revolution then sweeping Europe. Almost from the moment he recovered from the shock of sudden exile in 1848-9, he was at odds with the republicans of New York and Boston. The charge of treason was without foundation, since it was based on a misunderstanding of McGee's nationalism. In December 1848 he had written:

> It was not to the Irish soil, but to the Irish race, abroad and at home, I dedicated my life....Not to sticks nor stones nor soil nor sea is true patriotism confined, its sole object is the people. 116

This was the basis of McGee's commitment, not just to the Irish, but to

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115 Burns, Robin, "Thomas D'Arcy McGee: A Biography", (Unpublished PhD thesis, McGill, 1976), p. 124-5.

116 Nation, (New York), 30 Dec. 1848.

Canada. Realizing that the Irish had to live in British North America, he set it as his goal that they should be allowed to live fully and to their greatest advantage there. That necessitated adopting new soil and stones and sea to replace the old. His patriotism was directed at people in the new land, not against the old:

> Whether my way of serving [Ireland] abroad has been well or ill-chosen, there are few who have seen me tried, who will not admit that at heart I love her truely and dearly. She has been my inspiration so long as I can remember. 117

In the same letter, written to the Dublin Nation, he explained his stance on the Fenian question:

> I do not look upon these men - these American Fenians - as enemies of England...but as enemies of Ireland, and in this capacity they are formidable. 118

In November 1865, he advocated a scheme to bring Irish Canadian influence to bear on the British Government. He suggested that Canadians, especially those of Irish nationality, should together petition Westminister to take steps to remove Irish grievances. Moylan supported McGee on this issue, declaring:

> Let the actual wrongs of Ireland be redressed and the ground is taken from under the feet of Fenianism - it receives its death blow. 119

Moylan himself was concerned in the first half of 1866 to pour scorn on Fenianism at every opportunity, and to dismiss rumours of a Fenian invasion

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[117] Canadian Freeman, 28 June 1866; letter from McGee to Dublin Nation.

[118] Ibid.

[119] Ibid., 8 Feb. 1866.

of Canada as foolish and groundless. In January 1866 he wrote an article on "The Failure of Fenianism - The Vindication of O'Connell's Moral Force Policy", a deliberate retort to the Irish Canadian dismissal of moral force as a "sham".[120] Commenting on an alleged Fenian raid on the Eastern Townships in March, Moylan warned against criminals using the Fenians as a cover for their own activities and stated:

> The Fenian excitement is dying a natural death....They will not venture to trouble us on this side of the line. 121

With the Eastport adventure under way in April, Moylan took issue with the Irish Canadian on the question of loyalty, referring to the rival newspaper as "the O'Mahony organ in Toronto".[122]

Moylan was always glad to publish statements by Catholic Bishops who condemned Fenians or supported Confederation, since the influence of the hierarchy was central to his philosophy. In May he gave over an entire issue of the Canadian Freeman to an attack on the Fenians, and to proving that they were, in fact, an oath-bound society, therefore under Church condemnation.[123] All along, Moylan refused to believe that Fenianism was anything more than a money-making operation, with O'Mahony and his friends taking advantage of the deluded Irish Catholics of America. After the failure of Killian's raid, Moylan published a piece entitled. "Fenianism

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[120] Ibid., 25 Jan. 1866.

[121] Ibid., 1 Mar. 1866.

[122] Ibid., 26 Apr. 1866.

[123] Ibid., 24 May, 1866.

- A Retrospect", in which he referred to the organization as "a huge and heartless swindle".[124] He was sure that the danger of invasion, if ever it had existed, was past after Killian's failure. His surprise was all the greater, therefore, when the Fenian army under General O'Neill invaded Upper Canada on June 1.

McGee was not surprised at all. He had been sure that the Fenians threat of invasion was serious, and that it consisted of more than just an assault on the hearts and minds of the Irish in Canada. In March 1866 he had written an open letter to the Irish press on the subject of "The Irish Position in British and in Republican North America". In it, he claimed that the Irish position in the United States had been exaggerated in order to make their siuation seem more attractive to the people in Ireland. He pointed out that the very existence of the Fenians proved that the Irish Catholics had no place in the United States and had to look to Ireland for the fulfillment of their dreams. If the Irish had the opportunities for advancement in the United States, said McGee, they would not bother with wild schemes in Ireland. [125] According to McGee, the great obstacle to true understanding of the advantages the Irish in British America had over their countrymen south of the line was "pre-conceived opinions". Ignorance was a weapon of the Fenians and McGee intended to wrest that weapon from them. The invasion vindicated this approach. It proved that the danger from the Fenians was real, not only

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[124] Ibid., 10 May 1866.

[125] Ibid., 15 Mar. 1866.

to Canada, but to the continued good standing of Irish Catholics living there. In July, after the invasion, he spoke in Aylmer, Canada West, on the subject:

> As there are always many exciteable people particularly susceptible to democratic appeals conveyed in high-sounding phrases, I have thought it ma duty I owe to Canada, and I may add, my duty to Ireland, and to Irishmen at home and abroad, wherever a channel of access to them was open to me, to exhibit the folly, the falsehood and the criminality of this organization. 126

His initial reaction to the invasion in June was to call on all citizens to defend their country. He had a special word for the Irish Catholics:

> All Canadians have their duties; but we have a duty additional to the duties of others. We are belied as a class, we are compromised as a class, by these scoundrels; and as a class we must vindicate our loyalty to the freest country left to Irishmen on the face of the globe. 127

Moyl Moylan was quick to make similar declarations of loyalty on behalf of the Irish Catholic community:

> It were superfluous to point out to the reader - more especially to the Catholic reader - what his duty is at this crisis. It is that of uncompromising loyalty and allegiance to Canada. We have a country worth fighting and dying for. 128

He pointed to the issue at stake for the Irish Catholic population in the face of Fenian aggression against Canada:

> Our adopted country has been the scene of depredation and bloodshed; our fellow-subjects, acting in self-defense, have been slain and maimed on their own soil; and all this

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126 Ibid., 12 July, 1866.

127 Ibid., 7 June, 1866.

128 Ibid.,

> in the name of Ireland, and by men the vast majority of whom profess to be Irish Catholics. That the whole Irish Catholic body in this country has not been compromised beyond redemption by this villainous invasion, is not the fault of Mr. Sweeny and Mr. Peep-O-Day of Buffalo, and the rest of its agents and promoters. 129

This last phrase was another jab at the Irish Canadian, who were already embarrassed by the Fenian actions. Boyle tried to divert attention away from himself by pointing out that Moylan had been one of the petitioners who had succeeded in having Habeas Corpus suspended after the invasion. Moylan admitted the fact and explained, in an article on "Hidden Fenians" in Canada, that:

> Now, it is quite certain that a large number of ill-disposed persons, including thieves, burglars and cut-throats, had established themselves in Toronto, Montreal, and other large cities and towns in Canada. 130

The achievement of McGee and Moylan should not be underestimated. It was to their credit that an anti-Irish pogrom was not whipped-up in the aftermath of the invasion, especially after the funerals of the young men killed in action at Ridgeway. That was what McGee had been dreading ever since he first spoke out against Fenianism. He had first-hand experience of the emotional power of "democratic appeals couched in high-sounding phrases". Not only had he succumbed to them in 1848, he was also a master of them in the cause of Confederation. His fear was that the Irish would be seduced into aiding the Fenians. When that danger was averted, there was the real fear of an anti-Irish backlash. McGee and

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[129] Ibid., 14 June, 1866.

[130] Ibid., 28 June, 1866.

Moylan were determined that no grounds would be given to justify such a reaction: hence their strong denunciations of Fenianism. That the risk of a backlash existed was proved by a letter in Moylan's newspaper on July 5. It was sent to McGee by one P. O'Beirne of Grimsby, Canada West, who had been dragged from his bed at night by Protestant vigilantes who suspected him of having Fenian sympathies. The writer was indignant and fearful: a loyal patriot had been ill-treated because of his religion and race, and the entire affair was the result of Fenian activities. In a number of townsiin Canada West, alarms were raised about the secret activities of Irish Catholics as imagined by frightened citizens. The Fenians were the scause of sectarian bitterness and suspicions, as McGee had feared. It was not surprising that he had no pity on those caught at Ridgeway under arms in the Fenian army. A Catholic priest wrote to ask him to intercede for these prisoners and McGee publicly replied:

> To whatever punishment the law hands them over, no word of mine can ever be spoken in mitigation; not even, under these circumstances, if he were my own brother. 131

When he spoke in the same way at a public meeting, he was hissed by a number of people. He clearly lost his temper with them. He had saved themIrish from a dreadful reaction by being so public in his opposition to the Fenians, thereby distancing them from Irish Catholics in Canada; now some of them were hissing him like a traitor. He strode to the front of the platform and spoke clearly:

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[131] Ibid.

> I repeat deliberately, these men deserve death. But I will add, the spirit of our times is opposed to capital punishment.
>
> As to the handful who hissed just now, in the far corner, if I had not stood between them and the machinations of these men and their emissaries, some of them would be sharing today the fate of those condemned.
>
> I have had in my hands evidences of your criminal folly, and I could have put some of you where you could not hiss much, but you were not worth prosecuting. 132

This was in November 1866, and it may seem that McGee was being unreasonably harsh with his hecklers. But by then he had been through three years of being vilified and threatened by his fellow-Irishmen for daring to stand up for a humane and reasonable attitude among the Irish of the North American colonies. He had spent most of those years apart from his wife and family in the service of his adopted country, trying to bring to reality his dream of a new nationality. Almost alone among the Fathers of Confederation, D'Arcy McGee dedicated himself to an idea, and he knew of the great cost involved:

> In public life in this country, the bitterness is real, the hardships are real and the rewards chimerical. The public man gives up his domesticity, is banished from his family for six months in the year, until even his children only recognize him as an occasional visitor.
>
> Is this not a sacrifice? He exposes his character to be traduced, and his motives to be aspersed, while he undertakes the heavy load of public business. 133

Among those who were more than ready to traduce McGee's character and cast aspersions on his motives were Timothy Warren Anglin and Patrick Boyle. At first it may seem strange to link the respectable editor of the Morning Freeman with the radical, almost anonymous editor of the

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132 Quoted in Slattery, The Assassination of D'Arcy McGee, p. 349.

133 Ibid., p. 349-50.

Irish Canadian; but, in fact, they shared a common attitude to McGee and his role in the Irish Catholic community. Anglin, as we have shown, had little time for McGee and his "visionary"schemes of nationality. Nor washe prepared to recognize McGee's efforts against the Fenians:

> We believe that Mr. McGee did absolutely nothing to prevent the spread of Fenianism in Canada, because his language on that subject, uttered to please his patrons, was always calculated to irritate and provoke rather than to persuade. If Fenianism made little way among Irishmen in Canada it was we believe because their own good sense and their own knowledge of the duty owed to the country of their adoption stood in the way. 134

Such a dismissal of McGee's work is simply breathtaking in its pettiness. Not only was McGee trying to keep Fenianism from spreading in Canada; more importantly, he tried to prevent Fenianism being identified with the Irish Catholic population; and in this he was very successful. If he had not stood openly against the Fenians, leaving it to Anglin and Boyle to speak for the Irish Catholic community, then the invasion of 1866 would probably have marked the start of a campaign of retribution against that group such as happened in Ireland in the wake of the Fenian rising there in 1867. Certainly Anglin, in his ambivalence and desire to protect himself, did less than nothing to help avoid such a campaign in New Brunswick.

Boyle, likewise, played with fire until the summer of 1866, and in doing so put his readers at risk. His open support for the Fenians from 1863 until early 1866, and his close relations with Michael Murphy

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134 Morning Freeman, 6 Aug. 1867.

and the Hibernian Benevolent Society became a major embarrassment to the newspaper and its publisher in April 1866, when Murphy was arrested on his way to join Killian at Eastport. Boyle made much of the affair, using it, in fact, to cover up the fact that he totally ignored what was happening on the Maine-New Brunswick border. Technically, the arrest of Murphy was a mistake, since he had not committed any crime. However, once arrested, he could not be released without loss of face for Cartier, who had ordered his arrest against Macdonald's wishes.[135] This concentration on the Murphy case was a rare break from an almost continuous campaign of vilification against McGee. Throughout 1866, the columns of the Irish Canadian were filled with insulting references to McGee and his work for Confederation. Boyle called McGee "a bastardised national emigrant, a member of the canaille of Irish society, a poor scholar from the purlieus of a provincial town in Ireland".[136] Letters lampooning McGee and signed "D'Arcy's Friend" were a regular feature of the newspaper's tirade against the "Modern Jester".[137] Alongside this vilification ran apparent support for the Fenians. In January 1866, Boyle commented clearly on where he stood:

> English tyranny will never give up the hold it has upon Ireland if it is not compelled by physical force to do so. 138

He even raised the idea of a Fenian invasion of British North America as

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[135]Stacey, C.P., "A Fenian Interlude", CHR, 1934, p. 147.

[136]Irish Canadian, 22 Nov. 1865.

[137]Ibid., 6 Dec. 1865.

[138]Ibid., 24 Jan. 1866.

a way of bringing England to her knees; though he was careful to add in parentheses, "not that we encourage it".[139] By openly supporting and approving of Fenian activities and methods, Boyle was building up an arsenal of ammunition which his opponents could use in their charges of Irish Catholic disloyalty. But he never seemed to realize what he was doing; and in May, after the Eastport incident was over and the threat of invasion was now leveled at Canada, he wrote:

> We ourselves cannot see how an attack on this Province can effect good to Ireland. It would certainly estrange the affections of many in Canada from the cause of Ireland who cannot see the object of breaking the peace of a people who havenneverwwrongedtthatppeople.[140]

It is incredible that Boyle did not realize that his articles in favour of the Fenians and advocating physical force in Ireland would have the same effect on non-Irish Canadians as an invasion. The pages of the Irish Canadian were calling into question the loyalty of the entire Irish Catholic population of Canada. It was useless for Boyle to claim that he was not a Fenian, or that the Hibernians had no links with that group. His words may have been strictly true, but his writing proved that there was another name for Fenians in Canada - Hibernians. In April 1866, Boyle claimed that the Government was secretly trying yo close the paper by preventing its copies reaching subscribers.[141] Cries of outrage came oddly from the man who was advocating treason.

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[139] Ibid., 3 Jan. 1866.

[140] Ibid., 16 May 1866.

[141] Ibid., 25 Apr. 1866.

It is not surprising that Boyle and the Irish Canadian had no kind words for Confederation. What is surprising, perhaps, are his reasons for not having faith in the scheme. As early as October 1864, he had passed Confederation off as impossible because the Americans would not approve!

> The sum of the matter is this: the great Northern Republic will not allow a rival in the shape of a 'British American Nation'. 142

Boyle generally had very little to say about Confederation. There is reason think that anything he may have said against the idea was inspired, not by any constitutional scruples, nor, like Anglin, by any latent sense of loyalty to the Province of Canada or the Empire. It is far more likely that Boyle rejected Confederation in part because of who he saw as its promoter - D'Arcy McGee. During the Quebec Conference he referred to McGee as "the father of this political prodigy".[143] Boyle's feelings, apart from those concerning McGee, were quite detached on the Confederation issue:

> We believe the people of Canada, or the vast majority of them, are not, at the present time, prepared to accept this scheme....it requires but a general election here to give the coup-de-grace to Confederation, and the inordinate amount of humbug attached to it since its appearance on the surface political. 144

After the Quebec Resolutions were published, Boyle accepted the whole thing rather off-handedly, as almost irrelevant:

> We agree with the scheme, so far as to say it is time our present system of government should be abolished, and some system...of more power and vigour substituted

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[142] Ibid., 26 Oct. 1864.

[143] Ibid., 27 Sep. 1866.

[144] Ibid.,

> for it. But before we adopt another let us well consider whether...this is the right one. 145

Boyle gave most of the space in the Irish Canadian to the Fenians and events in Ireland, mentioning the Quebec Conference only once.[146] His whole emphasis was on Ireland and the Irish, and this is where he and McGee were most at odds with each other. Boyle never became a member of the new nation created at Confederation; he remained incorrigably Irish. An Irishman living in Canada, not an Irish-Canadian. Even the Fenian invasion did not turn him from his set course, and he commented on the events of June 1866 in a most detached way, quite unlike McGee and Moylan.

> We have ever doubted the utility of attacking Canada as the road to Irish freedom....we regret the unfortunate occurence which has marred the happiness and peace of this country. 147

His objection to the invasion is on the grounds of utility, not morality. He "regrets" the invasion as "unfortunate", without mentioning the fact that Canadian citizens were killed in the process. Instead of condemning the Fenians, as even Anglin did eventually, Boyle made excuses for them, claiming that the invasion was planned by the United States Government, and that:

> The strenuous efforts made by the United States authorities to enforce their neutrality compelled the Fenian leaders to abandon their designs against Canada. 148

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[145] Ibid.

[146] Ibid., issues from Sep. to Jan., 1866.

[147] Ibid., 6 June, 1866.

[148] Ibid., 27 June, 1866.

He almost seems to be saying that everything would have been all right if the Fenians had at least been allowed to pursue their "designs against Canada", and that somehow the American Government spoiled the whole thing for all.[149]

By the end of 1866, Boyle was making optimistic comments about the future of the Fenian organization and praying for victory in Ireland:

> Oh holy Ireland...may the prayers of millions of your exiled offspring be answered by the God of battle in sure and decisive victory to your arms. 150

Boyle and Anglin fought against McGee and everything he stood for, but for different reasons. Boyle's nationality was Irish and it would ever be Irish. As late as 1873, Boyle was still calling for allegiance to the old nationality:

> Above all and before all, we must remember we are Irish. We must preserve our identity as a race in our new home, and not suffer ourselves to be swallowed up in the maelstrom of other nationalities. We must still remember that to Ireland we owe our first love and that we should never forget or forsake her till her national autonomy is reconquered. 151

This was diametrically opposed to everything McGee had hoped for in Confederation for the Irish in Canada. It was an attempt to form an Irish-Canadian nationality to mirror that of the Irish-Americans. As McGee said of the latter group, their existence was an indication that the Irish

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[149] Ibid., 13 June, 1866.

[150] Ibid., 16 Nov. 1866.

[151] Ibid., 1 Jan. 1873.

had not yet found their place in American life. Boyle's writings, had they been representative, would have said the same for the Irish in Canada. But he was almost unique among the Irish Catholicsjournalists in Canada during that period, in that he spoke for a few and was out of step with the rest. This was clearly seen during the invasions, when the Irish Catholics did not rise in their support, and were prominent in their loyal service against the invaders. What Boyle and the Fenians forgot was that the Irish may listen eagerly to emotional appeals to Irish national feeling, they may march and sing and threaten and bluster, but it not an easy thing to get them to actually take up arms in rebellion. It was said of Stephens that he "failed to realize that it is one thing to wave the flag and talk the good fight, and quite another to be present at the actual test of arms".[152] John O'Leary, from his experiences with the Fenians found that:

> Your average bourgeois may make a very good sort of agitator, for here he can be shown, or at least convinced that his mere material interests are concerned, and that he may serve them with little or no material risk. A rebel however, you can rarely make him, for here the risk is certain and immediate, and the advantage, if material advantage there should be, doubtful and distant. 153

In that sense, the Irish were very bourgeois in Canada in 1866. They had little material possessions to protect, but what they had they valued, and they were not going to let the Fenians, however patriotic they may have been, interfere and put at risk the social and economic

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[152]D'Arcy, p. 409-10.

[153]O'Leary, I, p. 31.

gains the Irish Catholics had made in Canada.

What the Fenians proved in Canada was that D'Arcy McGee had been far more perceptive than many had given him credit for. He had seen the inherent danger of an Irish-American society preaching republican treason against the British Crown. He saw the appeal such a society would have for Irish Catholics, always susceptible to emotional appeals to Irish nationalist feeling. He saw that the non-Irish population of British America would easily identify the Fenians with Irish Catholics north of the line, since it had always been assumed that such Irishmen were naturally rebellious and disloyal. Above all, McGee could see that a new nationality was an answer to the problem, but only if he could distance the Irish in the new nation from the Fenian agitation. Politically, what that would mean was that ethnic and religious labels would become irrelevant in the new nationality that would be created by Confederation, however long that process might take. In the general election to the first Dominion Parliament in July 1867, McGee summed up his hopes:

> Assuredly I look forward to the day when the people of this country will go to the polls, not as British or Irish or French, not as Protestant or Catholics, but as Canadian subjects and fellow citizens. 154

The Fenian threat had helped push the Irish Catholics nearer to that day forcing them to choose in their loyalties. But the price for McGee had yet to be paid.

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[154] Canadian Freeman, 18 July, 1866.

V. The end of an era

McGee had fully expected to be part of the new Dominion, both as an eager participant in the governing of Canada, and in the drawing-up of the final details of the British North America Act which was due to be drafted in the summer of 1866. In both he was to be bitterly disappointed. The Fenian invasion, and serious disputes in the Assembly on the question of educational rights, had prevented the Canadian delegates from leaving for England to discuss the terms of the British North America Act. In August, McGee wrote to Moylan, mentioning in passing that he had been invited to be one of the delegates at the London Conference. But when the list of delegates was published at the end of September, McGee's name was not on it. There was controversy over his exclusion, since it seemed that no-one had a better right, or was better qualified, to join the negotiators. But this was but the first of a series of shocks McGee received in the next few months.

In June of 1867, the Montreal Gazette published the list of members of the first Dominion cabinet. Again, McGee was not included. It would appear that John A. Macdonald had offered McGee a Ministry, in writing, at some time in early 1867.[155] But the necessities of balancing regional and ethnic representation in the new Government were more important to the well-being of the new nation than personal commitments. In fact, McGee had foretold such a difficulty in a letter to his constituents in May 1867. He was concerned about the need to incorporate the Maritimes as fully as possible in the Parliamentary life of the new country:

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[155] Slattery, The Assassination of D'Arcy McGee, p. 385.

> In all administrative arrangements with our maritime fellow-subjects...it must be the constant, unceasing care of every patriot hailing from the divisions of Quebec and Ontario, to observe not only a liberal, but a generous rule of distribution. The public men of the seaboard deserve richly of the new Dominion; and if there are any of our own men nearer home who have equal claims, it would be much better they should wait, than that the false but effective insinuations of anti-Unionists should appear, even temporarily, to be countenanced by facts. 156

Even so, McGee resisted the attempt to exclude him from the cabinet. It took two long talks with Cartier and a generous offer from Charles Tupper to bring McGee around to the sacrificial altar. Tupper agreed to give up his seat in the cabinet to an Irish Catholic member from Nova Scotia, if McGee gave up his promised seat to Alexander Galt, who represented the English Protestant community of Quebec Province.[157] That way, Irish Catholics would still have representation in the Dominion cabinet. McGee put a brave face on it, even telling his constituents that he "heartily approved" of the deal.[158] In fact, he must have been bitterly disappointed and hurt.

The reason for McGee's exclusion is hard to find. Some say this was partly retaliation by Macdonald for criticisms McGee made of him in his role as Minister of Militia at the time of the invasion. Macdonald was not the kind to forget an insult.[159] Others point to McGee's drop in popularity among the Irish Catholics, as evidenced by his failure, in the

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[156] Canadian Freeman, 30 May, 1867.

[157] Slattery, The Assassination of D'Arcy McGee, p. 387-9.

[158] Canadian Freeman, 9 July, 1867.

[159] Slattery, The Assassination of D'Arcy McGee, p. 346.

election of 1867 to carry the majority of Irish Catholics votes in his constituency of Montreal West. This was the first time McGee had ever had to seriously contest the seat since he first won it in 1857. One historian has linked this failure with his exclusion from office:

> [McGee's] outspoken position on Fenianism had cost him a great deal of Irish support, and thus made him expendable, if not a liability in Canadian politics. 160

Whether this is so or not, what is certain is that his exclusion from the cabinet weakened his position vis-a-vis the more militant nationalists in the Irish Catholic community. His rival in the election campaign had been, for the first time in his career, another Irish Catholic, Bernard Devlin, President of the St. Patrick's Society of Montreal. Devlin was the candidate of those whose support McGee had alienated by his attacks on Fenianism. It was, in many ways, to be a continuation of McGee's fight against the dangers of reviving old feuds in the new land. The question, raised once more by the election in Montreal West, was: to what extent could the Irish Catholics in Canada remain divided in their allegiance to the new nation?

In launching his campaign for Parliament, McGee had addressed his opponents with typical bluntness:

> You do not pretend to condemn me for anything done in any character or capacity as a Canadian legislator, but only because I have been unsparing, and, as you think, unnecessarily severe on the Fenian Brotherhood.

He pointed out that the Fenians had proved to be everything he had warned against, and with great clarity and insight, McGee diagnosed the cause of

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160 Burns, Robin, "Thomas D'Arcy McGee: A Biography", p. 361.

the hatred shown him by his opponents:

> My unpardonable sin was telling the truth by way of prevention and in advance of the times; if for this you condemn me, I must bow to your decision, though I protest against its unreason and injustice. 161

It was reported that some of those present hissed when McGee mentioned the Fenians. The two camps of Irish Catholic thought were in direct conflict in the election, and McGee was expected to lose; at least that was the opinion of Brown and the Grits.[162] McGee had been very ill with an ulcerated leg throughout the campaign, and had tried to stand in an Ontario riding also. It was an uphill battle, hard to take after the months and years of struggle for Confederation. Then, on August 1, the Montreal Gazette published a letter from Archbishop Connolly of Halifax, which gave McGee the kind of support he needed. Connolly referred to McGee as "the Daniel O'Connell of Canada", and gave him all the credit for saving Canada from Fenianism, and Irish Catholics in Canada from any retaliation from loyal Canadians that would have been "nothing short of a disastrous conflagration". In a most explicit endorsement, Connolly said:

> If I were asked to whom above all others I would wish to entrust the advocacy of Ireland's cause, I should say, without a moment's hesitancy, that that man was Thomas D'Arcy McGee. 163

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[161] Canadian Freeman, 18 July, 1867.

[162] Howland to Brown, July 1867; quoted in Slattery, The Assassination of D'Arcy McGee, p. 406.

[163] Montreal Gazette, 1 Aug. 1867.

Another sensational event took place later that month, again courtesy of the Montreal Gazette. McGee published a series of articles tracing the spread of Fenianism in Montreal. He specifically accused the St. Patrick's Society of sympathizing with the Fenians, and of inviting John O'Mahony to speak there. He then named Bernard Devlin as the man responsible for all this, in his capacity of President of the Society.[164] It was cogent, well-written and explosive; but whether it was wise was another matter. Emotions were already running high in Montreal, and the articles inflamed passions to the point of violence. When McGee won the election by a small margin, a mob attempted to destroy his headquarters and other buildings where they thought McGee might be staying. The clash of loyalties was becoming more dangerous.

At this point, the other major Irish Catholic journalist in the Dominion, Timothy Warren Anglin, joined in the affair. Having spent the months since the 1866 election in New Brunswick fighting a rearguard action against Confederation, he had turned about and stood as a candidate for a French-speaking riding in the Province in 1867. Moylan, too, had considered standing for Parliament, but he, too, had been compromised by the anti-Fenian campaign and thought better of the idea. Of Boyle in this period, little is known of his reaction to the coming of Confederation, since the 1867 file of the Irish Canadian is missing. But it was

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[164] Ibid., 20 Aug. 1867.

clear that the role of the Irish Catholics in the new country of Canada would be largely decided by the stand taken by Anglin and McGee. Very soon, the two were representing the opposite camps of Irish Catholics. Arriving in Montreal, Anglin was invited to be the guest of the St. Patrick's Society, thereby siding with the opponents of McGee; it was an invitation he was quick to accept. His attitude to the new nationality had not changed since 1866 and his new ambition was to replace McGee as spokesman for the Irish Catholics of Canada.[165] Moylan was not impressed:

> Timothy is a Catholic of the Brownite stamp. He would be a Fenian if he had the pluck. 166

This kind of barb was typical of the relations between the two sides for the next year. The Canadian Freeman ran a correspondance on Anglin's ambitious efforts to replace McGee throughout the rest of 1867. Anglin's performance in the House of Commons was derided: "Anglin has yet some things to learn".[167]

But it was already a triumph for McGee that Anglin and Boyle were fighting him over issues concerning Canada and who was to have leadership of the Irish Catholics in the new nation. That the new nation existed was already totally accepted by all sides; not even Anglin thought it possible to go back to the pre-Confederation structures. The expansion to the west, the continued presence of Nova Scotia in the Federation, and the struggle for minority rights were all debated in a Canadian context in the Canadian

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[165] Canadian Freeman, 12,24 Dec. 1867; 2 Jan. 1868.

[166] Ibid., 22 Aug. 1867.

[167] Ibid., 28 Nov. 1867.

House of Commons. McGee had never claimed that the new nationality could be formed overnight along with political structures. As he looked forward to the day when Canadians would no longer classify themselves according to ethnic origin or religion, he recognized the slow pace at which that had to come about:

> ...in order that we might reach that day, and reach it soon, it is needful to conduct our detachments of population by already frequented ways and easy inclines to the general rendezvous. 168

For what was left of his life, McGee strove for unity of purpose and an end of sectionalism and sectarian strife, which he saw as the great danger to the entire enterprise. Politically, the new nationality was assured with Confederation; but bringing it to reality in the minds of the people was to be a gradual process requiring tact and tolerance, as well as some sacrifice. McGee wanted to see the rights of every part of the Dominion guaranteed:

> So long as we respect in Canada the rights of minorities, told either by tongue or creed, we are safe, for so long it will be possible for us to remain united. 169

He was optimistic. The events of the past few years had only confirmed him in his vision of a new nationality. In an early speech in the first Dominion Parliament, he exulted:

> We are here...as members of one Dominion, Puissance, or 'new Nationality'...to begin a new set of journals which we all trust may become the precious records of a great, free people. 170

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168 Ibid., 18 July, 1866.

169 Ottawa Times, 1 July, 1867.

170 Canadian Freeman, 21 Nov. 1867.

In another prophetic passage, McGee commented on how easily Confederation had been won. There had been no War of Independence, no Civil War. But perhaps that was not altogether an advantage:

> I verily believe that if we had bought the new Constitution with our blood, if we had paid for it its deserved price, we would understand its value better. 171

That, ultimately, was to be McGee's final contribution to the creation of his new nationality.

On April 7, 1868, Thomas D'Arcy McGee was shot dead as he arrived home from a session of the House of Commons. The nature of the crime shocked the entire country. For the first time, people realized just what McGee had risked in going against the Fenians, and upsetting the complacent nationalism of his fellow-countrymen. The sacrifices he had made to bring about a new nationality on the North American continent were seen in perspective for the first time by the nation at large. His death had results that he himself would never have dreamt possible. It brought people to the realization that sectional and sectarian discord was a dangerous thing topplay with. Anglin and Boyle may have searched their hearts, wondering whether their violent and provocative articles had in any way contributed to McGee's death. Even the St. Patrick's Society of Montreal, which had expelled him just months earlier as a traitor and a scoundrel, marched in his funeral procession. Either hypocrisy or awareness motivated their members in taking such a public step of recognition of McGee's worth.

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171 Montreal Gazette, 18 July, 1866.

McGee's last speech in the House of Commons on the night of his death, was a fitting climax to his life's work. He appealed for reason and fair play for the people of Nova Scotia, trapped against their will in the new nation:

> It may be that there are grounds for complaint.... But Nova Scotia must only ask us to consider these subjects from a broad national point of view, and to deal with herself, not with exceptional partiality, but in the same spirit of even-handed fairness which we extended equally to Quebec, Ontario or New Brunswick.... Our friends need have no fear but that Confederation will ever be administered with serene and even justice. 172

McGee then repeated his belief that such a new experiment in nation building needed one essential feature for success:

> Time, Sir, will heal all existing irritations; time will mellow and refine all points of contrast that seem so harsh today; time will come to the aid of impartial justice. 173

It was a magnificent summation of a career dedicated to creating a new nationality. It was not blind or naive about the problems, but it had faith in the basic soundness of the experiment. It was fitting that the last words of the prophet of the new nationality to be spoken in the Canadian House of Commons should be the climax of his own personal odyssey:

> [Confederation's] single aim from the beginning has been to consolidate the extent of British North America with the utmost regard to the independent powers and privileges of each Province, and I, Sir, who have been, and am still,

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172 House of Commons Debates, 1st. Session, 1st. Parliament, (Ottawa, 1967), p. 469, 470.

173 Ibid., p. 470.

> its warm and earnest advocate, speak here not as the representative of any race, or of any Province, but as thoroughly and emphatically a Canadian, ready and bound to recognize the claims of my Canadian fellow subjects, from the farthest east to the farthest west, equally as those of my nearest neighbour, or the friend who proposed me on the hustings. 174

The speech was a marvellous and a perfect end to his parliamentary career. D'Arcy McGee had reached the end of the process leading to a new nationality. He sought to show the way to others of his own, and of all races in the nation. But he never forgot his birthplace.

It was also fitting that his last public letter, written just hours before his death, was to Lord Mayo, the Secretary of State for Ireland. In it, McGee openly protested British policy in Ireland and he also suggested a remedy. Moylan published the letter after McGee's funeral to show how unjust his accusers had been in calling him a traitor:

> Let me venture to say, in the name of British America, to the statesmen of Great Britain - 'Settle for our sakes and for your own...on terms to satisfy the majority of the people to be governed....there is one miraculous agency which has yet to be fully and fairly tried out in Ireland; brute force has failed, proselytism has failed, Anglification has failed; try, if only as a novelty, statesmen of the Empire! the miraculous agency of equal and exact justice for one or two generations.

Pointing out the loyalty of the Irish in Canada, McGee gave credit to the advantages and freedom enjoyed by the Catholics of the nation. He then

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[174] Ibid., p. 471.

pointedly stated:

> Therefore it is, my Lord, we are loyal to the Queen in Canada....Were it otherwise, we would be otherwise. 175

In these last public statements, McGee pointed the way for further growth towards a new nationality for all races in the Dominion. His main object was reconciliation among the various ethnic groups that made up the new nation; encouragement of immigration to populate the land; and the extension of Canada's borders in the west:

> If I could...keep repeating in the ears of our Statesmen one phrase, it would be 'colonize the Saskatchewan!' The future of the Dominion depends on our early occupation of that rich prairie land. 176

Although he did not live to see that idea come to pass, one of the last meetings he had in his life was with Angus Morrison, a member of Parliament from Ontario who was pleading the case of the Red River settlers in their desire for self-determination. Morrison mentioned in a letter to the leaders at Red River that he had informed McGee of their demands, and that McGee was completely in agreement with them. His only request was that they should not appear to be threatening the Canadian Government in any way. Conciliation was the key to his thinking.[177] As he had said, as long as the rights of minorities were respected, the new nationality would be safe. He left a legacy for Canada, and especially for the Irish Catholics of Canada; one which Moylan and Anglin would inherit in the years to come.

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[175] Canadian Freeman, 21 May, 1868.

[176] Montreal Gazette, 29 Feb. 1868.

[177] Oliver, E.H., The Canadian Northwest, (Ottawa, 1915), Vol. II, p. 876, Letter from A. Morrison, M.P. to President Thomas Spence, Apr. 4, 1868.

McGee's death was a watershed in the history of the Irish Catholic community of British America. Before it, everything had been traced back to Ireland and the Irish identity of the community as they sought to come to terms with being Irishmen in British America. But, in his death, McGee changed that perspective for them. By dying for the new nationality, as he surely had, McGee had completed the process of forcing the Irish Catholics to look forward to something new. It was not sudden, nor easily perceived at the time; but from 1868 on, Irish Catholics in Canada ceased looking back for an identity, and started to look for it in the new land. This can be seen in the personal odysseys of the journalists we have been studying. James Moylan continued to be very much what he had always been: a Catholic journalist who was highly suspicious of Protestants. By 1869, he was off on his anti-Brown campaign again, blaming the Grits for most of the problems facing the new Dominion, including the Red River troubles, and sectarianism in education.[178] He became very involved in the question of immigration, as McGee had been, and finally found work in the Canada Emigration Office in 1870.[179] In the aftermath of McGee's death, there had been something of a witch-hunt against suspected symathizers of the Fenians. It was thought that the assassination was part of a general conspiracy by the Fenians and hundreds of Irish Catholics were arrested and imprisoned without trial. Moylan himself was convinced of the guilt of the man tried and hung for the assassination, James Patrick Whelan.[180] He continued to attack Fenianism, concentrating on its anti-Catholic aspects, until after a second, pathetic attempt at invasion by that group

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[178] Canadian Freeman, 28 Jan. 1869; 23 June, 1870.

[179] Ibid., 26 May, 1870.

[180] Ibid., 7 Jan. 1869.

in May 1870, when a few hundred Fenians under General O'Neill tried to achieve a second battle of Ridgeway but were easily repulsed by Canadian militia. In the spirit of the new nationality, Moylan called for fair play for the Metis in Red River, and acknowledged the legitimacy of Riel's government there in 1870.[181] The most obvious change in Moylan's attitude to the new nation was that he no longer believed in an independent Canada as he had in 1866. He had come around to see the importance of the link with the Empire; and when some people tried to form an Independence League in 1870, inspired by a misunderstanding of McGee's new nationality, Moylan would have nothing to do with them:

> If we are to preserve our institutions we must, at all hazards, maintain the Imperial connection....Independence is a myth; annexation, after the cutting of British connection, a certainty. Let us, therefore, stay as we are. 182
>
> If we are going to commit political hari-kari, let us rather go for annexation at once. 183

Although he could still be accused of being too concerned with Irish Catholic interests, Moylan was well on the way to assimilation in the new nationality of his friend.[184]

Patrick Boyle was not so easily changed. He remained a confirmed Irish nationalist, with a loyalty to Canada as his home, but a greater love for Ireland paramount in his affections:

> Above all and before all, we must remember that we are

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[181] Ibid., 7 July, 1870.

[182] Ibid., 30 June, 1870.

[183] Ibid., 21 July, 1870.

[184] Ibid., 23 June, 1870 and following issues.

Irish....to Ireland we owe our first love. [185]

Boyle was arrested in the aftermath of the assassination and held in prison for months. On his release, he thanked George Brown of the Globe for being the only major Canadian journalist to question the arbitrary treatment of the detainees.[186] Such an act by Brown, acknowledged by Boyle, was a sign that traditional sectional animosities could be overcome in a new nationality. Boyle was arrested again in March, 1869 on a charge of libel. He had accused the prison authorities of responsibility for the death of a detainee, and was removed to Ottawa to stand trial.[187] He seems to have toned down his comments after that time, and by the end of 1870, even Macdonald could consider taking over the newspaper and using it as an organ for the Conservatives in their bid for Irish Catholic support.[188]

Timothy Warren Anglin was, ironically, to have the most success in adapting to the new nationality. Having taken his place in the Canadian House of Commons in 1867, he prepared to challenge McGee for the title of spokesman of the Irish Catholic community in the Dominion.[189] In spite of claims to the contrary, it is unlikely that Anglin had the charisma or talent for such a role as long as McGee was available. After the murder, Anglin found himself in an awkward situation: he had taken the side of those Irish Catholics who now came under suspicion of assassinating McGee.

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[185] Irish Canadian, 1 Jan. 1873.

[186] Ibid., 2 Sep. 1868.

[187] Canadian Freeman, 11 Mar. 1869.

[188] Senior, Hereward, The Fenians and Canada, (Toronto, 1978), p. 134-5.

[189] Baker, p. 131.

He himself had been outspoken in his criticism of McGee and his idea of a new nationality for years; and now that McGee had died a martyr to the cause he espoused, Anglin was eager not to appear to favour his opponents. In his statement to the House of Commons following the murder, Anglin was careful to be as noncommittal as possible, merely expressing general sentiments of shock and sorrow. But he did give expression to one idea that McGee had been warning about for many years; the danger by association that the Irish Catholicsoof Canada faced from the Fenians. It took the murder to convince Anglin that "the crime of one [Irishman] will reflect on them all".[190] In the years following 1868, Anglin played a full role in the House, representing the interests of his Province conscientiously. He recognized that Irish Catholics were actually better off in the Dominion than those in the United States,[191] and he was prepared to work within the new structures, especially when he saw how little power was left to the Provincial Assemblies. From 1874 to 1878, Timothy Warren Anglin was the Speaker of the Canadian House of Commons. The clearest indication of the change that had taken place in his thinking, and of how far he had come from the old narrow nationalism of New Brunswick, is his removalffrom the Province in 1883 to Toronto. Timothy Anglin, the Catholic editor, went to work on the Toronto Globe of his old enemy George Brown.[192] It was a slow process, but the Irish Catholics were being slowly assimilated into a new nationality, as McGee had hoped.

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[190] House of Commons Debates, p. 479.

[191] Morning Freeman, 18 July, 1871.

[192] Baker, p. 236.

The Irish Catholics of Canada suffered a change in the years after 1868. They toned down their hitherto high profile presence in Canadian society; and there was very little political activity that could be called specifically Irish after that year. Even the militant St. Patrick's Society of Montreal became more circumspect in their activities. In 1869, Archbishop Lynch considered them to have been sufficiently rehabilitated to enable him to review their St. Patrick's Day parade.[193] What had happened in the wake of April 1868, was that the process of assimilation, already under way in the early 1860's, was hastened by a communal sense of guilt and shame which facilitated their absorption into the mainstream of Canadian life.

Canada itself was coming to the end of an era by 1870. With the entry of Manitoba into Confederation in 1870, and of British Columbia in the following year, the dream of a nation "from sea to shining sea" had become a reality. The further path to a new nationality within these new political boundaries would stretch on into the next century, but the role of Irish Catholic journalists in that development ended with the final and feeble Fenian attack on Canada in 1870. The complete lack of success of that operation, either in military terms, or in terms of Irish Catholic support in Canada, showed that McGee's work had not been fruitless. The last thirty years of the nineteenth century would see the fading influence of Irish Catholics in the areas of journalism and politics. After 1870 it became increasingly a matter of Canadians of Irish extraction, rather than of Irish-Canadians. The Celts experienced a twilight of culture and identity as they became part of a new nationality in British America.

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[193] Irish Canadian, 24 Mar. 1869.

CHAPTER FIVE

CELTIC TWILIGHT

Thomas D'Arcy McGee had called his Canadian newspaper the New Era, "as an indication of the time of its birth".[1] With his death, it may be said that the era came to an end. By 1870, the attitudes of Irish Catholics in the Dominion of Canada were conforming increasingly to the pattern McGee had envisaged for them in his speeches and articles since 1857. The refusal of the Irish Catholic community to support the final Fenian attempts at invading Canada in 1870 formed the last link in a chain of allegiances to a new nation and a new nationality in Canada. From the time of McGee's death, they had been forced to choose sides, much as McGee had always forced choices on them and their journalists. It was McGee who brought the question of a new nationality to the attention of Irish Catholics in British America, and imposed it as an issue to be debated. Moylan, Anglin, Boyle, Whelan and other less important Irish Catholic journalists wrote tellingly on the issue, but it was always in response to something that McGee had brought to their attention. They were always reacting to ideas that he was responsible for; often, as in the case of Anglin, identifying Confederation with McGee. We have noted that much of Anglin's opposition to Confederation in 1865-66 was based as much on his

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[1] New Era, 25 May, 1857.

dislike for McGee as for any theory of Federation. In that respect, McGee is the central, pivotal figure in any study of Irish Catholic reactions to the concept of a new nationality. Quite simply, it can be said that without McGee, a new nationality would not have figured in the thinking of Irish Catholics at this time. None of the other Irish Catholic journalists were showing any sign of rising above the usual murky world of sectional and sectarian journalism that was the normal pattern in British America at the time. For all his support of McGee's ideas, James Moylan could never resist making blatantly sectarian attacks against George Brown and the Gritspoliticians and journals. Nor was this confined to political affairs; he was as quick to write an article condemning Protestant theology as he was to attack Protestant politicians.

The same was true of Anglin, whose language did nothing to ease sectional animosities in New Brunswick. Patrick Boyle was single-minded in his hatred of British rule in Ireland and was not willing to fit into a Canadian environment without dragging in historic Irish grievances. McGee was the only one who was prepared to rise above sectional and sectarian differences to work with whoever he believed was most useful for the new nation. Even experiments that failed, like his alliance with George Brown in 1858, did not prevent him from trying again; and his continued friendship for political foes, however much they or their journals personally vilified him, did much to create an atmosphere conducive to the formation of otherwise unthinkable alliances in 1864-5. Clearly then, Thomas D'Arcy McGee must be granted the honour of being the most important Irish Catholic

journalist of the period in connection with the new nationality. The others merely reacted in response to McGee's actions.

Among the Irish Catholics, over whom he had most influence, until at least 1867, Confederation was something quickly accepted. The question of Fenianism was more pressing for them than any constitutional changes. But, again through McGee's influence, the Irish Catholic populationoof the new Dominion had been brought to a choice of loyalties very like that of the Irish Protestants of the early nineteenth century. Just as they had chosen to adopt British nationality in place of a Protestant nation in Ireland, so Irish Catholics were brought to accept McGee's role for them in the new nation. Although there was undoubtedly a great deal of sympathy for Fenianism among Irish Catholics in Canada, that sympathy was never translated into active support as the Fenians had hoped. Moylan was also instrumental in bringing this situation about, showing the Irish Catholics that loyalty to Canada was not only to be expected of the Irish in return for the favours bestowed by the freedoms they had there, it was also consistent with a continued interest in Irish affairs. Although Canada was their new nation, and the recipient of their undivided allegiance, there was nothing in that to prevent Irish Catholics in Canada from using what influence they might have with the Imperial Government for Ireland's sake. McGee had done so in his letter to Lord Mayo and in conversations with William Gladstone during trips to London. Moylan had written often about Ireland's wrongs in the pages of the Canadian Freeman; so there was an alternative to the narrow nationalism of Patrick Boyle and

the Irish Canadian. McGee's condemnation of the Fenians and the threats of invasion by Fenian hordes culminating in the battle of Ridgeway in July 1866, forced the Catholic Irish of Canada to face up to the question of nationality. Were they to be Irish, or Canadian? Many chose, like Boyle, to remain Irish; but the history of Irish Catholics after McGee's death shows that the vast majority were resigned, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, to accept new nationality that left room for their natural interest in Ireland's affairs.

Irish Catholics were assimilated quickly and easily into the new nation after 1870. They experienced the normal pattern of immigrant assimilation after the first generation had settled down and the flow of immigration had slowed. This was happening in the 1860's, but the Fenian experience both aggravated the process, and, ultimately, ensured it. For the Fenians made the Irish Catholics visible in a way they could not avoid. With McGee's decision to attack the Fenians through publicity went the parallel that the entire Catholic community would also be in the limelight and compelled to declare their position on the issue of loyalty. They hedged on that until McGee's own assassination forced the issue and laid the Fenian ghost to rest in Canada. The Irish had chosen sides by 1870 and the Fenians were a spent force; partly because of McGee's death, and also because of the formal condemnation of the Fenians by the Vatican in 1870. In the end, their Catholicism overcame whatever vestiges of radical Irish nationalism still existed in Irish Catholic thinking. This must, of course, be seen as a generalization, since there were bound to be those who held to old allegiances; men like Boyle, who continued to have divided loyalties.

The response to McGee's vision of a new nationality among Irish Catholic journalists was varied and sometimes surprising. There were those like James Moylan who were immediately attracted to McGee and his ideas, though with unclear ideas of what a new nationality would mean for Canada or for the Irish Catholics. But the faith they placed in McGee, however often they may have disagreed with his blunt and sometimes insensitive way of educating them, was secure and almost independent of McGee as an individual. Moylan, for example, in the months when he was fighting with McGee over the alliance with Brown, did not turn away from the vision of a new nationality, only from the prophet. Others, like Timothy Anglin, rejected the vision outright as an invasion of their own nationality. Anglin, said to have been a Young Irelander, had obviously been free of the influence of Thomas Davis. He had no time for poetic dreamers and "new" nationalities. "The most determined isolationist" was not prepared either to see his adopted nation, New Brunswick, lost in the embrace of Confederation, or to see his position as leader of the Irish Catholics of the Province threatened by the rise of McGee. His was a very narrow and intolerant view of nationality and the future. Patrick Boyle raised an even more central question in response to McGee's theory of nationality: what was the fate of Irish nationalism to be in the new nationality? How much of what was Irish would survive the transformation? Boyle clearly saw Confederation as something merely political or constitutional. It was not, as it was for McGee, Moylan, and even Anglin, a step towards something larger and more comprehensive. For Boyle, such a step would itself have been unacceptable.

Moylan was essential to McGee's success. For many years McGee's echo, Moylan sooned reached a position of independent belief in a new nationality. He was the man who carried the moderate Irish Catholics along with McGee, and in 1858-9 had actually saved McGee from political death. Anglin, as an opponent, was perhaps not up to McGee's standards, but he was astute enough to see through much of the Confederation rhetoric and define the main issue as loyalty. When he chose to try the new system, he was doing a great service to the new Dominion. His continued opposition to Confederation would have made the following years of consolidation very much more difficult, especially in his own Province of New Brunswick. By 1870, he was preaching toleration for the people of Manitoba, and in 1885 he pleaded in Riel's defense.[2] He sought an end to sectarian animosities and recognized the growing importance of the Federal Government in the life of the new nation. As McGee's successor to the leadership of the Irish Catholics in the Dominion of Canada, Anglin ironically found himself following McGee's ways more closely than he could have expected. It was an important aspect of the continuing assimilation of the Irish Catholics into a new nationality.

The Irish Catholic journalists of British America were the means by which their coreligionists and countrymen were educated in the need for a re-evaluation of their sense of identity. The question of a new nationality was debated in the pages of the newspapers, and not on the streets. The process of assimilation of the Irish Catholics into a new nationality was their main achievement in the years 1857-1870. The catalyst was Thomas D'Arcy McGee:

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[2]Baker, William M., Timothy Warren Anglin, 1822-96, (Toronto, 1877), p. 242.

McGee had a vital role to play outside the confines of the Irish Catholic community also. Aside from McGee, most of the Fathers of Confederation promoted the scheme of union for very different reasons. These ranged from Galt's economic hopes for the future of the Canadian Provinces, to Brown's expansionist dreams in the west, to Macdonald's realization that something of the sort was essential to avoid a total breakdown in the political structures of the United Provinces. Although there were some who talked about forming a "new nation" in Confederation, in most cases such ideas were either temporary, as when Brown advocated such an idea at the Reform Convention in 1859, then moved to belief in dissolution of the Union in the following year; or else the advocacy of a new nationality was used to "sell" the scheme of Confederation to the Maritimes. But Thomas D'Arcy McGee was the only man who consistently preached Union on the basis of nationality, and who saw Confederation, not as an end in itself, but as a step to furthering that sense of identity he defined as a new nationality. Thus, it was McGee who gave to the new Dominion an ideology and a catch-phrase for defining itself: it was a new northern nation. Without that call to unity, however poetic and vague it may have seemed to some, there was nothing to give clear expression to what bound British Americans together. The economic motives for Confederation left the Maritime Provinces cold to the idea. The question of defense alone would not have convinced men like Anglin. But when the Empire seemed ready to leave British Americans to the fates, it was McGee's alternative of a new nationality that would be essential to the new nation. It was all they had to express their common identity.

For a brief period, the vision of a new nationality gave British Americans a higher sense of purpose in bringing about Confederation that they might otherwise have had. The extent to which it actually came to pass in the longer term is less certain. The uniquely Canadian literature and culture that McGee preached is still not developed, nor is that sense of common identity that differentiates Canadian from American. McGee's ideas were to be taken, after 1870, by a group of people calling themselves "Canada First", and changed from a vision of self-awareness and toleration into a xenophobic and intolerant form of nationalism that McGee might well have found repugnant. The one true success of the new nationality, however, was in the Irish Catholic assimilation. The new nationality was, indeed, a product of Ireland. Thomas Davis had enunciated its dogmas; Young Ireland had begun the process of education that would translate ideas into reality. That was destroyed in Ireland by revolutionary activity. In the United States, one Young Irelander tried to carry on that work on behalf of the Irish immigrants there; that was destroyed by Irish revolutionary radicals. In British North America he tried again, and no revolutionaries were going to stop him there. He made the new nationality the touch-stone of Irish Catholic loyalty, the context in which they were to find their identity in Canada. And yet today, Thomas D'Arcy McGee is almost unknown in Ireland. One writer has even claimed that, after the failure of the 1848 rising, "D'Arcy McGee turned venemously anti-Irish".[3] Such is the level of ignorance concerning the man.

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[3]Brown, Malcolm, The Politics of Irish Literature, (London, 1972), p. 134.

In reality, it is to the credit of Thomas D'Arcy McGee, and also that of those other Irish Catholic journalists studied here, that a distinctive Irish-Canadian community did not evolve to parallel that of the Irish-Americans in the United States. Instead, there was a part of the Canadian population that considered themselves Irish by descent. There would be no "hyphenated" Irish Canadians, no Irish-Canadian politicians, no specifically Irish organizations involved in the national political arena, other than the Protestant Orange Order. For Irish Catholics, at least, the new nationality was their way of becoming "Canadianized", as perhaps few other ethnic groups in Canada have been. For, aside from the Irish Catholics, McGee's hopes of a new nationality for British North America are still largely unfulfilled. Many of his ideas are yet to become part of the fabric of Canadian life; and until there is a distinctive culture, with its own literature, traditions and customs common to all Canadians, then the new nationality of Thomas D'Arcy McGee will remain a vision only.

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